

British businessmen expect Jordan to benefit from European tourism

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — More than half of British businessmen expect Jordan to benefit from European tourism in the wake of the elimination of tension and uncertainty following the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in October, a survey conducted by a London-based group has found.

The survey, carried out by Middle East Consultants, found that 56 per cent of British businessmen also expect new business opportunities arising in the Levant in an era of peace.

The poll was conducted among more than 200 participants in a "Europe and the Arab World" conference held under the Arab League umbrella in London in December, Middle East Consultants said in a release sent to the Jordan Times.

James Reeve of the research division of the British consultants was quoted as saying in the release: "There is clearly confidence that there will be real business resulting from the peace process and British companies are well placed to take advantage of this."

The survey found 52 per

cent of those polled believed that Jordan stood to benefit most from increased European tourism, followed by the West Bank (24 per cent), Syria (eight per cent) and Lebanon (six per cent).

More than two-thirds of those polled (70 per cent) saw the West Bank as offering better business prospects than the Gaza Strip following the implementation of Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho in May 1994.

Similarly, 82 per cent said they expected Beirut, the Lebanese capital, to regain its pre-civil crisis status as the financial hub of the Arab World in 1995, the survey results said.

More than half of those polled (54 per cent) also expected oil prices to weaken in 1995, and 78 per cent predicted privatisation moves in the oil-rich Gulf states would fail to take off.

In North Africa, 32 per cent of the target audience said fewer benefits could be expected from privatisation in Morocco, which has adopted a sweeping liberalisation programme, but 50 per cent believed that British companies stood to gain from privatisation in Tunisia.

Following is a summary of

the survey results as provided by Middle East Consultants:

North Africa

Question: Do you think political unrest in Algeria is likely to affect other North African markets in 1995?

Answer: Yes: 32 per cent; No: 68 per cent

Q: Do you expect privatisation in Morocco to benefit your business in the coming year?

A: Yes: 32 per cent; No: 68 per cent

Q: Do you expect privatisation in Tunisia to benefit your business in the coming year?

A: Yes: 50 per cent; No: 50 per cent

Q: Will European grants (Medinvest) encourage you to establish a joint venture in North Africa in 1995?

A: Yes: 18 per cent; No: 82 per cent

The Levant

Q: Do you think the peace process will generate business opportunities for your company in 1995?

A: Yes: 56 per cent; No: 44 per cent

Q: Will Gaza or the West Bank offer most business

opportunities in 1995?

A: Yes: 30 per cent; No: 70 per cent

Q: Do you see Beirut regaining its former status as the financial centre of the Arab World in the year ahead?

A: Yes: 18 per cent; No: 82 per cent

Q: Which of the following is likely to attract a growing share of European tourism in 1995?

A: Jordan: 52 per cent; Syria: 18 per cent; Lebanon: 6 per cent; West Bank 24 per cent

The Gulf

Q: Do you expect oil prices to strengthen or weaken in the coming year?

A: Strengthen: 46 per cent; Weaken: 54 per cent

Q: Will privatisation become a major trend in the Gulf in 1995?

A: Yes: 22 per cent; No: 78 per cent

Q: Are you planning joint ventures in the Gulf in the coming year?

A: Yes: 26 per cent; No: 74 per cent

Q: Do you consider Gulf security to be under threat in 1995?

A: Yes: 16 per cent; No: 84 per cent

Gamaa claims 15 policemen killed

CAIRO (Agencies) — The underground Gamaa Al Islamiyah has claimed responsibility for the wave of deadly attacks on policemen in south Egypt, saying it avenged the killings of its militants at the hands of police.

It also said 15 policemen died in the four separate attacks, rather than eight policemen and three civilians as reported by the Interior Ministry.

"At the start of 1995 and with the backing of our people in Mallawi, our mujahideen fighters carried out the 'law of talion' against 15 criminals of the security forces," Gamaa said in a statement.

Claiming responsibility for all attacks carried out in Cairo and southern Egypt since August, the group called on policemen and soldiers to join its ranks in the fight to overthrow the government.

Its statement was signed "the battalions of the martyr Talaat Youssef Hammam," after the former chief of the Gamaa military wing who was killed by police last April.

The group was "more determined than ever to pursue the jihad."

The Interior Ministry and police said the four attacks all took place near the town of Mallawi, about 300 kilometres south of Cairo, within the space of an hour.

They were among the bloodiest incidents since militants launched a violent anti-government campaign in March 1992. The campaign has cost 567 lives, according to an AFP count.

The gunmen fled and security forces launched a huge manhunt in the region, questioning hundreds of people and making dozens of arrests. All the attacks targeted vehicles with policemen on board.

Police said earlier that the attacks were believed to be the work of the Gamaa seek-

ing revenge for the killing of six militants last Wednesday in a police raid.

On Sunday, suspected Gamaa members killed another policeman near Mallawi, which has become the main battlefront for militant-police clashes in recent months.

The killings took to 27 the number of people killed in Egypt's political violence in the past six days alone. All but one was killed in or near Mallawi.

The Gamaa has targeted senior officials, Christians, tourists, liberal-minded intellectuals and policemen, mainly from the lower ranks, in its anti-government campaign.

The latest attacks took place in broad daylight and on Monday the gunmen stopped buses on the main road out of Mallawi to search for policemen on their way to work.

In one incident, they ordered passengers off a bus and shot dead five policemen by the roadside.

The tactics employed underlined a growing confidence by the gunmen and appeared to cast doubt on repeated government pronouncements that it had broken the back of the militants.

Prime Minister Atef Sedki, himself the target of a failed assassination attempt by militants, struck a familiarly optimistic note in a year-end speech last week.

He told police cadets that Egypt could expect 1995 to be a year of peace and security.

Monday's attacks led to the dispatch of reinforcements from the neighbouring province of Assiut, once the focus of militant violence. But security sources said police efforts are hampered by the geography of Mallawi, which is surrounded by thick sugarcane fields in which fugitive militants often hide.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli woman soldier jailed for theft

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli military court on Monday sentenced a woman soldier to five years in prison for stealing two submachine guns and selling them to Arabs in exchange for drugs, Israel Television said. Rachel Biton broke into the room of other soldiers on her Tel Aviv base and stole the two Israeli-made Uzi weapons. The television report said she traded the guns for drugs from an Israeli-Arab who passed the weapons on to Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories. Defence and prosecuting attorneys agreed in a plea bargain to a three-and-a-half-year prison sentence but an army judge rejected the compromise and imposed a five-year term. The army drafts most Israeli women at age 18 for a two-year compulsory service.

293 drug traffickers killed in Iran in 1994

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Revolutionary Guards killed 293 armed drug traffickers and arrested 623 others last year, a guards commander said Tuesday. General Mohammad Bagher Zolghadri, quoted by the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), said 17 tonnes of various drugs and weapons had also been seized in northwestern and southeastern regions of Iran. Iran is a transit route for drugs coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan destined for Europe and North America. Over 100 tonnes of drugs, mainly opium, were seized from March to December 1994, according to official figures.

Sudan opens stock exchange

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese authorities have opened a stock market, which will trade in shares for an initial period of just one hour a day, the director of the exchange, Abdul Rahim Hamdi, declared. Mr. Hamdi, a former finance minister, said 24 companies were originally listed on the exchange, which began operating on Monday, and about 100 more firms will join them once registration procedures are completed. During the first hour of trading, two banks, the Islamic Bank for Western Sudan and the Faisal Islamic Bank, sold 7,200 shares, raising 14,000 Sudanese dinars (about \$450). The Sudanese pound is still in circulation, but the dinar was introduced two years ago as the country's official currency unit. A dinar is worth 10 pounds. A press was recently opened in Khartoum to print banknotes for the first time inside Sudan.

Hariri undergoes operation to open artery

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri had an operation to open a partially-clogged artery on Monday at an Atlanta hospital in the United States. "Things are OK. I arrived yesterday in Atlanta. Today, I entered hospital. I did the tests and one (of my) arteries was partially clogged. A balloon was inserted into it and it was a success 100 per cent," Mr. Hariri told Beirut's Future Television in a telephone conversation from his hospital bed. "I will be in Beirut in a few days," added Mr. Hariri, a construction tycoon who has launched multi-billion dollar plans to rebuild Lebanon from the ruins of the 1975-90 civil war. Quoting a hospital statement, Future Television, which is owned by Mr. Hariri, said the 50-year-old prime minister was in good condition and was to leave the hospital on Tuesday. The statement said Mr. Hariri underwent the operation "after he was submitted to a medical examination as a result of a probing operation to his coronary artery."

Mourners demand revenge

(Continued from page 1) vided any proof in support of his claim.

"The army has carried out checks and is now in a position to deny this claim," the spokesman said.

In Damascus, Hamas vowed on Tuesday to avenge the killing of the three Palestinian.

The group, which is opposed to the Israeli-PLO self-rule deal, said in a statement faxed to the offices of an international news agency in Damascus that it considered the slain policemen as "Hamas martyrs."

Palestinian officials denied their police fired the first shots in Monday's attack, and Israeli media speculation on Tuesday focused on the possibility they came from a third source — perhaps anti-peace activists who fired from a neighbouring orchard.

Ahmad Tibi, an adviser to Mr. Arafat, said one of the dead policemen was shot while asleep in his bed.

"The Palestinian police didn't fire first on the Israeli soldiers," Dr. Tibi told Israel

Television. "One of the Palestinian police was shot while sleeping in his bed and his body was found in the bed."

The Israeli army colonel said one policeman surrendered when the Israelis asked that they come out of the house. But he said a second one came out shouting "Allahu Akbar" and firing. This policeman was shot dead.

According to the Israeli army report on Monday's attack, snipers late on Monday opened fire on an Israeli command-car on patrol near the Erez crossing, prompting the soldiers to seek back-up and launch a chase inside Gaza.

The soldiers later closed in on a house where they believed the gunmen were hiding, and ordered in English and Arabic those inside to surrender.

One Palestinian policeman did give himself up, but the others opened fire, and the Israeli soldiers attacked the house, hurling a grenade inside and spraying it with bullets.



FAMILY OF VICTIM: Mourning Palestinian women try to comfort 22-year-old Amal after she was told that her husband Nasri Hureini, 34, was shot dead by Israeli troops along with fellow activist Raed Shubhat in a firefight south of Bethlehem in the West Bank on Monday.

U.N. to quit Mogadishu HQ; 16 killed in fighting

MOGADISHU (AFP) — U.N. soldiers and civilian staff prepared Tuesday to abandon their compound in the Somali capital Mogadishu as rival factions fought for supremacy once the United Nations winds up its failed mission in March.

Senior U.N. officials said personnel will leave the sprawling headquarters and their checkpoints on Jan. 15 to retreat to the port and the airport of the embattled city.

The announcement came amid further fighting in southern Mogadishu between militias who appeared to be vying for position to control both facilities once the U.N. troops leave, raising the spectre of large-scale inter-clan warfare.

The fighting in the south of the city has left well over 100 dead and some 500 wounded since early December. Hospital staff and witnesses reported Monday that 11 people had been killed and 217 wounded since the weekend, including a Bangladeshi U.N. soldier injured by a stray bullet.

The retrenchment is expected to leave the few humanitarian organisations remaining in Mogadishu on their own, dependent on their Somali security guards. The convoys had been provided with some escorts by the U.N. troops.

The U.N. civilian staff, including special representative Victor Ghebreyesus of Ghana, will move to the airport, which is frequently hit by stray ordnance as rival militias battle with heavy weapons in near-

by streets.

"If the alarm bells go off, we can easily all be evacuated on one plane," said one staffer, evoking the prospect that a battle for the airport will start before the U.N. personnel leave.

Staff also fear attempts to loot remaining U.N. equipment.

The officials did not say whether the compound would be handed over to any particular Somali group, or whether it would be left for the militias to fight over.

The heavily guarded compound, part of which used to be the U.S. embassy, contains millions of dollars worth of equipment and prefabricated buildings, most transferred from previous U.N. operations, as well as many vehicles.

Original plans were for the equipment and buildings to be shipped out of Somalia by sea and air before the March 31 deadline, but heavily armed militias in pick-up battle-wagons have been hindering the evacuation.

The U.N. personnel will also abandon an office in north Mogadishu, which is controlled by self-styled interim President Ali Mahdi Muhammad, their checkpoints on the "green line" dividing the north and the south of the lawless capital, and a humanitarian coordination office at a point in south Mogadishu known as Kilometer Four, a site of frequent deadly clashes between U.N. troops and Somali militias, the officials said.

The 9,000 U.N. troops and

approximately 50 civilians remaining in Somalia — all now in Mogadishu — are due to withdraw from the ungoverned Horn of Africa country by the end of March following the failure of Mr. Ali Mahdi and his arch-rival, General Mohammad Farah Aided, who controls most of south Mogadishu, to agree on a government of national unity.

The peacekeepers, who arrived in 1992 to halt looting of food being distributed to famine victims and pacify the country, quickly became mired in the anarchic inter-clan fighting which followed the toppling of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in January 1991. He fled to Kenya, then Nairobi, where he died Monday.

At their peak, the international troops — U.S. and U.N. — numbered close to 30,000. They have lost more than 160 men in clashes with militias and from stray fire.

The United States and France have agreed to provide support forces to protect the departing U.N. personnel, but no date has yet been given for their arrival.

Hospital officials said Tuesday at least 16 people have been killed and more than 230 wounded in four days of militia battles in Mogadishu.

Fighting with mortars, cannon, anti-tank rockets and machineguns was less intense on Tuesday than previous days as clan elders were starting work on a possible ceasefire deal.

U.S. soldiers sue German companies

BONN (Agencies) — American soldiers who fought during the Gulf war have filed a lawsuit against 20 German companies which, they allege, allowed Iraq to build chemical weapons, the weekly Stern reported Tuesday.

The soldiers are asking \$1 billion in damages and interest for illnesses they developed after the Gulf war.

Thousands of American soldiers who fought during the 1991 war to oust Iraq from Kuwait have complained of symptoms that have eluded the medical community and have become commonly known as the "Gulf war syndrome."

Among the symptoms are chronic fatigue, depression and anxiety.

The suit alleges 20 defendants, including Thyssen AG, Preussag AG, Degussa AG, Sigma GMBH and Hebecker BAU, sold Iraq "substances and equipment" which it used to create chemical weapons.

A Degussa spokesman confirmed to Reuters the company had been served papers seeking at least \$50,000 in damages. He said the allegations were groundless and the company was confident the case would not succeed.

Stern quoted a Thyssen spokesman as also saying: "We think the suit is basically groundless."

Comment from the other defendants was not immediately available. No German company has acknowledged selling Iraq such material or technology.

Morocco to try gang for killing of Spaniards

RABAT (R) — Eighteen people charged with armed attacks in Morocco late last year, including one in which two Spaniards were killed, are to go on trial in the central city of Fez on Jan. 10, a lawyer said on Monday.

The group is accused of setting up a criminal gang, armed robbery, and premeditated murder, lawyer Abdul Khaleq Al Kadi told Reuters by telephone.

The court next week will

examine a record 500-page file on the attacks.

The weighty file was drawn up during four months of inquiry, and Mr. Kadi said: "It is a real record in Moroccan justice history."

The lawyer added that he had been appointed by the court to help the examination.

During the August and September, 18 suspects, members of the same group, were arrested in Morocco af-

ter an armed attack on a luxury hotel at the southern city of Marrakesh where two Spanish tourists were shot dead.

The gang had also attacked banks, a supermarket and a restaurant in other parts of the country, officials said.

Police seized an arsenal of weapons in a house owned by the father of one of the suspects in the Rif mountain village of Aknoul, north of Fez.

Five members of the group held French passports, but all were of Moroccan or Algerian origin. The authorities have described the suspects as "terrorists" bent on destabilising Morocco, but their political motivation was unclear.

Neighbouring Algeria has been racked by political violence since Jan. 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election which Islamic fundamentalists were poised to win.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Diplobo
17:30 Thelasma
18:30 Musique Sans Frontiers
19:00 News in French
19:30 Home Improvement
19:45 E-M6
20:00 Life in the Freezer
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:15 Law and Order
22:00 News in English
22:30 Snowy River
23:10 Coming of Age

PRAYER TIMES

05:09 Fajr
06:31 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:40 Dhuhr
14:20 Asr
16:49 Maghrib
18:10 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Saidhah, Tel. 810740
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661737
Terrence Church Tel. 623566
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel.
626543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel.
625236
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624328
German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-
ment of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to
rise further with warm and sunny
weather conditions prevailing and
winds becoming easterly moderate.
In Aqaba, winds will be northerly
moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 3/18
Aqaba 10/24
Dead Sea 1/20
Jordan Valley 8/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 17 Aqaba 23, Humidity
readings: Amman 32 per cent,
Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bahjat Bader 849362
Dr. Ahmad Ashab 602507
Dr. Sa'ad Ali 780285
Dr. Yahya Abdul Salam 736072
First pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 783336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairovkh pharmacy 636762
Al Salan pharmacy 636760
Ya'acoub pharmacy 637660
Shamsiati pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

EBRD:
Dr. Ali Al Shoaibi 246140
Al Quds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Khalil Abu Husain 985000
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Road Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 751231
Highway Police 934923
Traffic Police 996390
Public Security Department 630332
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Central Amman Telephone 121
Overseas Calls 610230
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 741111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Companions 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akiloh Maternity, J. Amn. 642412/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 623232
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsiati 644171/4
Shamsiati Hospital 699131
University Hospital 843945
Al-Mustafa Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/77
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Islamic, Al-Mustafa 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775117/6
Army, B.Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital 674135
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)905060
Al Fihm Modern Hospital (09)90990
IBRD:
Prince Basmal Hospital (09)75555
Greek Catholic Hospital (09)727275
The Al Nafar Hospital (09)47010
AQABA:
Princess Heys Hospital (09)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information
Department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel. (09)53200-
5, where it should always be ver-
ified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)

07:45 Aqaba (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:35 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:45 Larnaca (RJ)
10:15 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
10:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:45 London (RJ)
10:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
10:45 Istanbul (RJ)
10:45 Paris (RJ)
10:45 Rome, Vienna (RJ)
10:45 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
10:45 Rome (RJ)
10:45 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
10:45 Rome (add) (RJ)
10:45 Beirut (RJ)
10:45 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:35 Cairo (MS)
10:30 Sana'a (Y)

10:45 Damascus (AZ)
12:35 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:20 Athens (AE)
14:25 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
15:45 Larnaca (CY)
16:20 Beirut (ME)
17:45 Athens (OA)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)

06:30 Aqaba (RJ)
06:30 Frankfurt, Berlin (add) (RJ)
06:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
06:30 Berlin, London (RJ)
07:45 Istanbul (RJ)
10:15 Tunis, Comblanc (RJ)
10:45 Aqaba, Rome (add) (RJ)
10:45 London (RJ)
10:45 Beirut (RJ)
10:45 Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)
10:45 Riyadh (RJ)
10:45 Aden (RJ)
10:45 New Delhi (RJ)
11:25 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
12:45 Sana'a (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

Home News

Jordanian, Israeli businessmen explore ways to cooperate

Israel business group leader optimistic

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The heads of the Jordanian and Israeli federations of chambers of commerce met for the first time in Amman on Tuesday in what was described as an Israeli message of assurance to Jordanians that peace has its economic dividends that could be reaped together.

Dan Gillerman, head of the Israeli Federation of Chambers of Commerce, who led the Israeli team to the talks with Haidar Murad, president of the Jordanian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, described the meetings as aimed at setting up a framework for relations between the two sides.

Mr. Gillerman said that during the meeting it was agreed to work towards formalising an agreement on cooperation between the two federations, and look closely at joint ventures that would allow Jordanians to take advantage of the privileged status Israel enjoys under accords signed with the United States and Europe.

According to Mr. Gillerman, Israeli manufacturers and exporters were interested in exploring possibilities of setting up joint ventures under which "the manufacturing could be done in Jordan and the finishing could be done in Israel."

The finished products could be exported to North America and Europe under favourable terms which include tariff-free Israeli imports to those countries under the privileged trade agreements that Israel has concluded, noted Mr. Gillerman, who sounded highly positive about prospects for such projects.

"We are aware that there is scepticism among Jordanians about the pace at which economic cooperation with Israel should proceed and over the dividends of peace," said Mr. Gillerman.

"I believe that our visit here is very timely (given this scepticism) in that it is sending a message to Jordanians that 'peace pays' and the 'dividends of peace are there and there to be reaped together'."

"It is the first time that the heads of the federations of chambers of commerce of the two countries met," noted Mr. Gillerman, who arrived here on Monday leading a 25-member delegation for talks with

Jordanian counterparts. Mr. Gillerman said the meeting was suggested by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on the fringes of the Oct. 30-Nov. 1 economic conference on the Middle East and North Africa held in Casablanca, Morocco.

During the meeting, attended by the members of the board of the Jordanian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Mr. Murad "advocated a cautious approach to economic ties," Mr. Gillerman told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Mr. Murad also emphasised the need to create a mechanism for cooperation between the Israeli and Jordanian private sectors addressing the concerns of both sides, he said.

The two sides also discussed preparations for a conference to be held in Amman this year as a follow-up to the Casablanca meeting and possibilities of joint projects to be presented at the gathering, Mr. Gillerman said.

Also discussed during Tuesday's talks was the creation of a regional chamber of commerce, "which, hopefully, will eventually include all other countries in the region — Syria, Lebanon and Iraq," Mr. Gillerman said.

Mr. Gillerman described the members of the delegation accompanying him as distinguished businessmen with large operations in Israel in foodstuff, medicine, textiles, and agriculture.

The team also includes heads of the largest department stores in Israel which would like to import Jordanian products, he said. "There is also a firm commitment to hold a Jordan Week in Israel," to familiarise Israelis with Jordanian products, Mr. Gillerman said, adding that no date had been fixed for the event.

The Israeli team also invited Mr. Murad to visit Israel along with a delegation of Jordanians interested in doing business with Israelis, he added. No comment was immediately available from Mr. Murad.

Simultaneous with the formal talks between the federation heads and officials, members of the Israeli delegation met with Jordanian businessmen to discuss immediate possibilities of trade.

However, no actual deal

is expected to be executed until the two sides finalise a trade accord as called for in the peace treaty.

The Israeli team, which included several Israeli bankers, crossed to Jordan through the newly opened Jordan River Bridge and will return home across the Araba Crossing in the south after visiting Petra on Wednesday.

The team's visit came amid reports that Israel expects to conclude a most favoured nation (MFN) trade agreement with Jordan within weeks.

The English-language Jerusalem Post quoted Zohar Peri, director of foreign trade at the industry and trade ministry, as saying that Israel had agreed to quicken the pace of negotiations on a simplified MFN accord at a meeting of the joint Trade and Economic Cooperation Committee in the northern Israeli town of Tiberias last week.

During that meeting, the Israeli side presented a draft MFN accord to the Jordanian negotiators, who are now expected to respond to it in two weeks, the Post said Tuesday.

Although the Oct. 26 Jordan-Israel peace treaty "provides for a free trade area between the two countries, Israel conceded to the more limited agreement proposed," the Post reported.

According to a source quoted by the Israeli paper, Israel wants to first to reach an accord in principle on a free trade area with Jordan, with details for its implementation to be negotiated later.

"However, the Kingdom does not want to commit itself now to a free trade area with Israel since it has no similar agreement with an Arab country," said the Post.

Jordan wants first to see how the trade relationship develops and what it could expect to gain from upgrading it, the source quoted by the paper said.

Under the peace treaty, Jordan and Israel are expected to finalise a trade agreement by May.

Mr. Gillerman, describing members of the delegation accompanying him as highly influential in formulating Israeli trade policies, said they would seek to incorporate in the proposed accord elements of what they saw as significant to a trade relationship with Jordan during their visit here.

Patient fight ends in death in Fuheis

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A patient at Fuheis Hospital for Nervous Disorders Monday beat another patient to death, police reports said.

According to the report, one of the doctors at the hospital told police that while he was distributing medicine to the patients Monday, he heard a scream coming from one of the rooms. When he went to check, he said, he found two patients in a physical struggle.

The report said that the

victim, identified only as A.M.H. 60, was struck in the head several times by his assailant.

According to the report, the assailant used only his bare hands in the fight.

The victim was taken to Al Bashir Hospital but died a few hours later.

An official at the Fuheis hospital contacted by the Jordan Times Tuesday refused to comment on the incident and would not release any details.

After several attempts to contact any police official to elaborate on the matter, none was available Tuesday evening.

Panel to examine collapse of bridge — mayor

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi said Tuesday that a committee was formed by the municipality to investigate the collapse of a bridge under construction near the Seventh Circle.

Dr. Abbadi told the Jordan Times that samples of cement, iron and other material were collected by committee engineers for examination.

"Until now, we don't know the cause of the collapse, but we have taken samples from the wreckage to determine the cause," Dr. Abbadi said.

The accident occurred at 6 p.m. when workers were pouring concrete on a section



Municipality workers Tuesday clean up the wreckage of a bridge which collapsed under construction Wednesday evening near the Seventh Circle in Amman (photo by Rana Hussein)

of the bridge. One side of the bridge suddenly collapsed.

Several workers were injured in the incident, reports said. An engineer at the site said that most of the workers were released from hospital today.

According to Dr. Abbadi,

Cabinet approves EU office to coordinate regional projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cabinet Tuesday approved a European Union (EU) request to establish in Amman a permanent office of a general secretariat to follow up on the work of regional development working groups.

The office will act as a liaison between the EU and the governments in the Middle East region.

Regional development issues were agreed to as part of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, and the EU pledged to offer financial assistance and expertise for such development schemes.

French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet said last

October that the European Commission in Brussels was presenting the foreign ministers council of the European Union with a formal proposal to earmark \$600 million for economic assistance to countries involved in the Middle East peace process.

The Council of Ministers also approved the hosting in Amman of a special team from the United Nations Compensation Fund which is due to arrive here by mid-January.

During the week-long visit, the team will hold talks with government officials on compensation for thousands of Jordanians who lost property and jobs in the Gulf states as

a result of the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

The Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, also approved the opening in Amman of an office for the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation to promote sheep trade with Jordan.

Australian embassy sources said that nearly 600,000 heads of sheep will be imported by Jordan from Australia during 1995.

The Cabinet approved a request by a local company to cooperate with Jordan Television to boost television broadcasts in Zarqa, Irbid and Maan.

Senate approves budget

(Continued from page 1)
training with special focus on training young people in maintenance and production work.

He said that the third element concerns the reduction of the role of the public sector in favour of the private sector. The public sector is currently employing 55 per cent of the total Jordanian workforce but it is now up to the private sector to help the government contain the rate of unemployment.

The prime minister said the government was determined to give a greater role in handling the economy to the private sector and had started steps towards achieving that objective.

The fourth element of concern to the government is ending the division of Jordan into rural and urban and badia regions. Dr. Majali said the government was determined to remove the differences and gaps among these regions by increasing and improving the quality of services to the rural and badia regions which would eventually result in the redistribution of population.

Stage set for change

(Continued from page 1)

number of conditions. Many will have to be from Parliament, whether deputies or senators, to signal faith in the people's choice of representatives. But alongside this apparent "message of democratic policy," the Cabinet will also have to include a strong team of veteran economists "who inspire confidence," as one insider put it.

Dr. Majali revealed that the general census conducted last month proved that half of the Jordanian population lives in Amman and Zarqa. He said that the government wanted to bring about a fairer distribution of population over all areas, especially the sparsely populated districts which hold great development potential.

He said the fifth element concerns the peace process which has taken Jordan into a new horizon where it is exerting efforts to reduce its foreign debts and increase foreign aid to the Kingdom. The government will pursue this course and hopes to acquire additional funds for financing development schemes, he added.

The prime minister stressed that the government was in full agreement with the Senate's recommendations for privatising public sector organisations. The government will take into account all remarks made about the improvement of the performance of the Jordan Electricity Authority and the Telecommunications Corporation and privatising them.

On the foreign policy level, the sources expected that the new government, having taken over from Dr. Majali who had led the country into peace talks as chief negotiator and concluded the task by signing the peace treaty with Israel, will now assume the new task of defining the country's relations with Arab countries, and paramount among them the Palestinian leadership.

Russian assault

(Continued from page 1)

In a letter offering talks to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Mr. Dudayev said the final push into Grozny had been a "catastrophe for the attackers and a tragedy for the defenders."

Interfax news agency said its correspondent in Grozny had reported that rebels were still keeping Russian troops well away from the palace.

Russian authorities have periodically said since the advance began that their troops had secured control of the building.

Interfax said the main theatre of fighting was near the railway station, 1.5 kilometres west of the palace. A second pocket was five kilometres to the north.

There was also word Tuesday on just how much of a ghost town Grozny has become. The International Committee of the Red Cross said in Geneva that 300,000 people — 75 per cent of the capital's population — had fled the city.

A Red Cross relief convoy carrying mainly medical supplies made it into the south of Chechnya on Tuesday, a Red Cross spokesman said.

Tuesday's Russian shelling appeared aimed at keeping Chechen forces away from some 60 Russian tanks and armoured personnel carriers trapped in the city after the failed ground offensive, Chechen fighters said.

Six Chechen fighters left the city carrying the bodies of two fallen comrades. "The fighting is intense, but the Russians have suffered heavier losses," said one soldier, said Dudayev, 32.

As night fell three buildings were in flames.

Visiting British MP says talks fruitful

AMMAN (J.T.) — A visiting British Labour Party Parliamentarian Tuesday described his talks with Jordanian officials as positive and fruitful, saying that new scopes of cooperation between the two countries have been opened.

At the end of his two-day visit here, Grevil Ganner, who was on a tour of the region, said his trip was aimed at finding new ways and methods to accelerate the peace process and overcome difficulties facing the establishment of a new Middle East.

Mr. Ganner, who left for Damascus Tuesday, said His Majesty King Hussein's wise leadership has enabled Jordan to enter the peace process with full confidence in ensuring security, peace and prosperity for the people.

Scientists plan Mideast physics conference

AMMAN (Petra) — The prospect of organising an international physics conference in the Middle East was reviewed Tuesday at a meeting at the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) attended by a group of Italian scientists and Jordanian physicists and heads of physics departments at the state universities.

Director of the HCST Infrastructure Sector and the council's acting Secretary General Khaled Shreideh reviewed at the meeting the establishment of the council and its goals, and its achievements at the national, Arab

and international levels. He also briefed the audience on the council's role in supporting scientific research and development projects.

Two professors from Cagliari and Torino universities in Italy said the Italian group was touring the Middle East region to discuss the time and venue for hosting the conference.

Dr. Shreideh said the meeting discussed the prospect of having Jordanian and Italian universities conduct joint research in physics and advancing academic cooperation in academic programmes.

Ferry company reports \$9m profit

AQABA (Petra) — The Arab Maritime Bridge Company (AMBC) Tuesday reported a \$9 million profit for 1994 and announced plans for expansion.

The AMBC, owned by Egypt, Jordan and Iraq was established in 1985 with a \$6 million capital. The company owns three ferry boats which commute between the ports of Nweibeh in Sinai and Aqaba in Jordan.

According to Mohammad Dalabih, the company's general manager, the ferries last year

made 1,900 trips between the two ports, transporting 1,348,662 passengers and 300,408 tonnes of luggage.

He said the company also transported 79,344 vehicles which included small cars, buses and trucks.

The AMBC recently added a small vessel to its fleet, raising the total daily capacity to 7,500 passengers, Mr. Dalabih said.

This year, the company plans to operate two speed boats to transport passengers

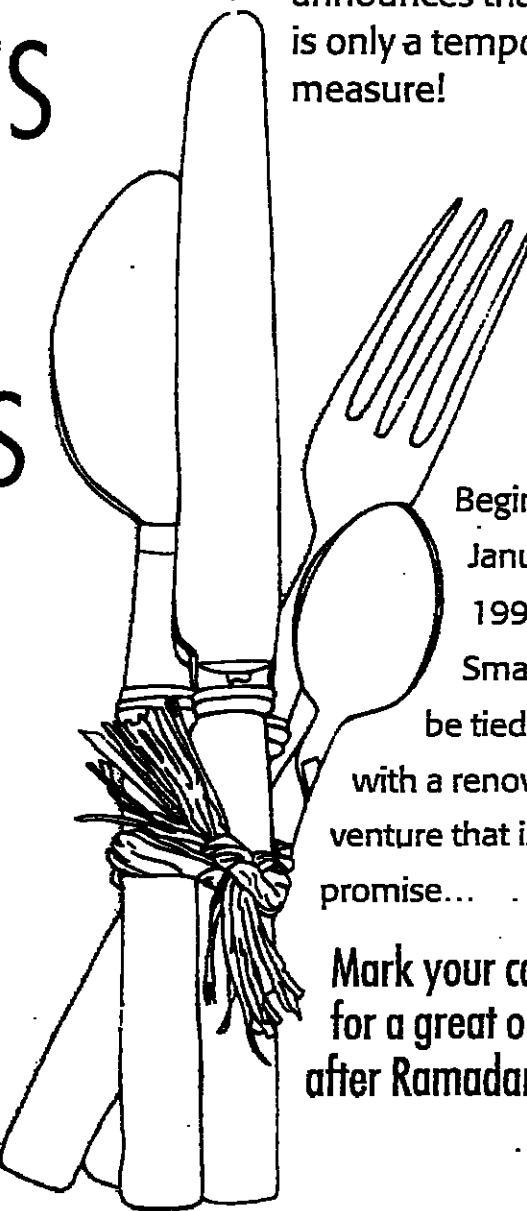
between Nweibeh and Aqaba in one hour rather than the three hours required by ferry, Mr. Dalabih said, adding that the two vessels have a combined capacity of 500 passengers.

Referring to installations, Mr. Dalabih said the company has started building a 4,000-square-metre complex in Aqaba to serve as a waiting area for vehicles and passengers and their luggage.

He said the project was expected to cost JD5 million.

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Cambodian rebels abandon base

PHNOM PENH (Agencies) — Khmer Rouge guerrillas abandoned a stronghold in northwest Cambodia in the face of advancing government forces backed by hundreds of Khmer Rouge defectors, the governor of Siem Reap province said Tuesday.

"We completely took Phnom Kulen yesterday without fighting," Ton Chay told Reuters Tuesday.

A hundred Khmer Rouge fighters had been guarding the stronghold. "They just abandoned the base once they knew we had advanced against them," the governor said.

Phnom Kulen lies 60 kilometres north of Siem Reap town, the provincial capital, and is best known as the quarry for the sandstone used to build the 12th-century Angkor group of temples.

A provincial police commissioner, Major-General Chea Sopha, told Reuters on the telephone that some of the Khmer Rouge soldiers who had been based at Phnom Kulen in the past had defected to the government while others had fled to their bases along the border with Thailand.

He described the attack as "a great victory for the government army as the base was taken without bloodshed."

The Khmer Rouge, which is held responsible for the deaths of a million Cambodians during their reign of terror from 1975 to 1979,

continue to wage a low-level guerrilla war against the Cambodian government.

Meanwhile, Khmer Rouge guerrillas shot dead a militiaman and seven train passengers near Phnom Penh in their second railway ambush in little more than six months, officials and survivors said Tuesday.

"The Khmer Rouge killed eight people, including four women, and wounded thirty-six," state railway director Pick Kimseang told AFP.

"They ambushed the train in Samaki Meanchey district, Kompong Chhnang province Monday afternoon," he said, referring to an area around 60 kilometres northwest of the capital.

The guerrillas stopped the train by blowing up the railway tracks, then opened fire on the carriages with machine guns and B-40 rockets, said the deputy commander of the train militia, who survived the attack.

"First the Khmer Rouge exploded five mines on the track then they opened fire. Our militia retreated because we only had 20 men but they had about sixty," Chum Pum said, adding his brother was the sole militiaman killed.

The seven other victims of the attack, including the four women, were civilians. One other militiaman was wounded and the other casualties were civilians, Chum Pum said.

The ambushed train was laden with peasants riding to

Phnom Penh to sell farm produce, Chum Pum said.

"After the raid, the guerrillas started to rob things from the passengers," Chum Pum said, saying that most of the attackers were wearing Khmer Rouge uniforms.

Railway officials said the train was seriously damaged in the attack and several coaches were derailed.

Cambodia's ancient and decrepit railway system, with its slow-moving trains, is a frequent target for the Khmer Rouge and rural bandits. Passengers say the 20 or so train militiamen offer little protection.

Most of the victims of train ambushes are ordinary Cambodian citizens, some of whom may be kidnapped, as well as robbed, and only released if their relatives pay a ransom of some kind.

Government soldiers arrived at the scene of Monday's train ambush after the Khmer Rouge had left, another survivor told AFP, saying he did not understand why the soldiers took so long to show up.

"I don't know why the government troops didn't come to help us in time, because the attack took place close to the government base," he said.

On July 26 Khmer Rouge guerrillas ambushed the southern-bound train from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, killing 13 passengers and marching off several others,

including three Westerners, to their deaths several months later in the jungle.

Some government officials admitted that in the July attack the government police supposedly guarding the track may have been acting with the Khmer Rouge ambushers, and conveniently ignored the ambush in exchange for a share of the spoils.

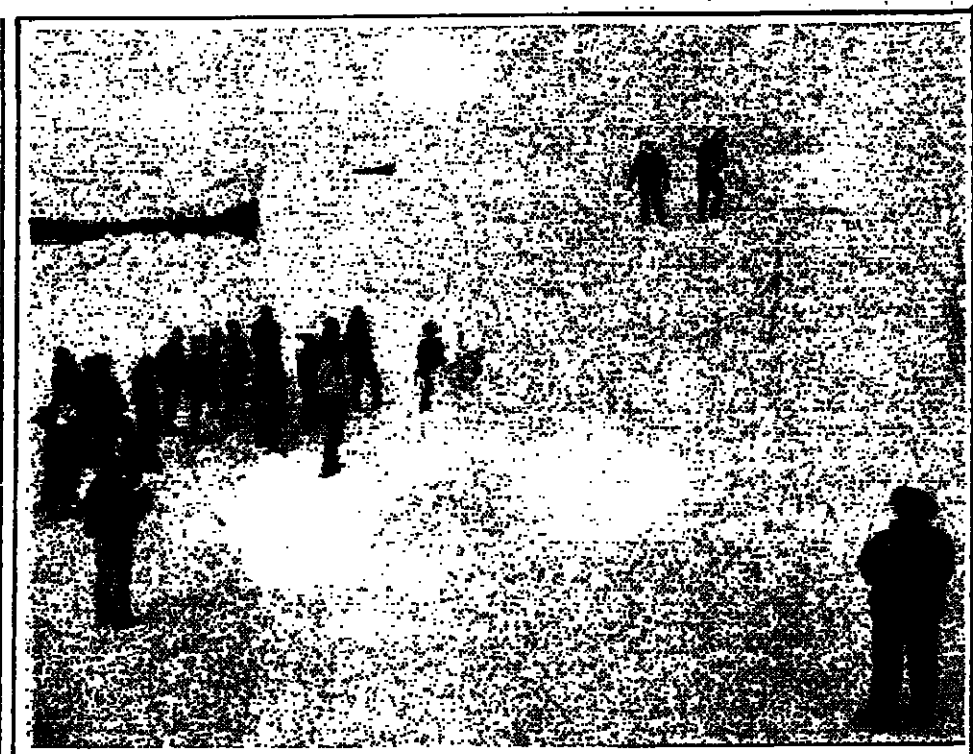
In a separate development, Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai said Tuesday that he would personally decide whether Cambodian General Sin Song should be returned to Phnom Penh, where he faces jail for an abortive coup bid last July.

Speaking after the weekly cabinet meeting, which the Thai press had said would decide whether to extradite Sin Song or deport him to a third country, Mr. Chuan said he expected to make a decision within the week.

Analysts generally expected Thailand would refuse Cambodia's request to return the fugitive general to Phnom Penh, where he was sentenced in absentia in October to 20 years in prison.

The Thai Foreign Ministry said earlier it had concluded, based on documents provided by Phnom Penh, that Sin Song was wanted on a political rather than a criminal charge and that he should thus not be extradited.

After escaping from custody prior to the trial, Sin Song turned up in Thailand



IGLOO HOTEL: Local workers pile-up snow and ice in the northern Swedish town of Jukkasjärvi in this file picture in order to build this year's "Igloo-Hotel," which is an annual attraction in this remote spot some 1,400 kilometres north of Stockholm. The opening of the 28-room "Igloo-Hotel" — which includes a bar-restaurant, a sauna and some 160 "heated" sleeping cabins for those who do not like to sleep on iceblocks — is expected for Jan. 13. The hotel's season ends naturally in late April, when the sun takes care of the hotel's demolition and recycling (AFP photo)

Sri Lanka, Tigers agree to halt fighting

COLOMBO (Agencies) — The Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tiger guerrillas have agreed on a cessation of hostilities, a top official who attended peace talks Tuesday announced here.

Kusumini Balapatabendi, the leader of the government peace mission said it was now up to President Chandrika Kumaratunga to decide on a date to give effect to the agreement.

"The talks were very cordial and very satisfactory," he said, arriving here after talks with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the rebel-held northern town of Jaffna.

Mr. Balapatabendi, who is

also Mrs. Kumaratunga's secretary, said that the LTTE freed four police prisoners to mark the resumption of peace talks Tuesday. The main item on the agenda was the "cessation of hostilities."

He said the LTTE supreme commander Velupillai Prabhakaran had been "so happy" with the talks that he decided to free four policemen instead of the two they had originally planned.

The five-member government team included an army brigadier and a navy captain.

The government delegation is now expected to brief Mrs. Kumaratunga, who is likely to announce the date of the ceasefire in her scheduled

address to parliament Friday.

The talks were postponed after the Tigers were suspected of involvement in the Oct. 24 killing of opposition presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake.

An outbreak of attacks on army camps by rebels last month and the shooting Saturday of a Tamil politician opposed to the rebels also made it harder to resume the talks, the source said.

Karavali Kandasamy, general-secretary of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam, a former Tamil separatist militia, was shot in the neck by a gunman at his home. His party blamed the

China welcomes offer for Taiwan talks

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday welcomed an offer to hold high-level talks with Taiwanese officials this month but analysts said Beijing was virtually certain to ignore President Lee Teng-Hui's latest offer of a summit.

A spokesman for Beijing's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) said no letter setting out Taiwan's offer had yet been received. But he added that "the time proposed poses no problem."

The unofficial relations between the two rivals are dealt with by ARATS and Taipei's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) which said Monday that it wanted to hold talks at the end of January.

"We hope to get an official communication from the SEF soon," said the Chinese official.

The SEF proposed talks, alongside lower-level meetings, between Jan. 19 and 27.

Under the Taiwan proposal, SEF Vice-Chairman Chiao Jen-Ho would meet his ARATS counterpart, Tang Shubei.

The ARATS spokesman would not say if China would agree to the Chiao-Tang meeting since last August.

But observers said there were hopeful signs of a positive response.

Recent talks between the two bodies have concentrated on the repatriation of mainland hijackers and stowaways. Taiwan also hopes to discuss trade issues.

A solution to the problem of how to deal with hijackers who force planes to Taiwan has been held up by the question of sovereignty. Taiwan and China have claimed to rule all of China since the end of the civil war in 1949 when the nationalists fled to Taiwan.

Taiwanese officials have indicated that if the next round of talks make progress, then topics such as Taiwanese investment in China could be added to the agenda. A meeting between the presidents of SEF and ARATS, Koo Chen-Fu and Wang Daohua, could also be held.

President Lee Teng-Hui was reiterating his willingness to meet Chinese President Jiang Zemin at an Asia-Pacific summit in November in Osaka, Japan, the China Times said Tuesday.

Mr. Lee told local newspaper editors that "the best time and location for talks"

was in Osaka, where the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum will be held, the daily said.

The mass-circulation daily quoted Mr. Lee as saying that relations should be developed steadily through continued exchanges.

Observers said though that the possibility of a summit was negligible. Japanese officials have hinted Tokyo has no plans to invite Mr. Lee to the APEC meetings, in line with the policy adopted by previous APEC host nations.

Taiwan's president was not invited to the APEC Seattle summit in 1993 or to the Jakarta summit in November last year because the host nations wanted to avoid irritating China.

Beijing has issued repeated warnings to the rest of the world not to invite Taipei leaders to official meetings, regardless of whether the forums are political or economic in nature.

The mainland's leadership apparently fears that including the island in any regional or international event would boost Taiwan's diplomatic standing and its sovereignty claims.

29 killed in Philippine bus crash

ECHAGUE, Philippines (R) — At least 29 people were killed, and their bodies plundered by thieves, after their bus plunged more than 100 feet (33 metres) from a bridge in the northern Philippines Tuesday, police said.

Thieves looted cash and valuables of the victims as they lay pinned in the wreckage of the bus near Echague in the northern Philippines, making identification difficult.

"These people are shameless. They stripped the dead of their wallets," a police officer said in an interview.

Echague Mayor Fernan Babaran, quoting witnesses, said the bus smashed through the left side of the bridge before dawn as the driver raced another bus travelling the same route.

The driver was killed in the crash and there was no trace of the other bus, he said.

More than 30 passengers were injured when the bus crashed through the bridge railing and plunged into a deep ravine outside Echague, 250 kilometres north of the capital.

One 13-year-old survivor said he was awake when the accident occurred before dawn.

"I saw the bus jump from the bridge so I just held on tightly to my seat," Joseph Quesada said.

"Then I saw the bus conductor remove the door and that's how we got out. There was a lot of blood. A lot of dead people. There were also many pinned down by the bus. They were all crying," he said.

Quesada, his left eye injured in the crash, said he was still looking for his mother, who was with him on the bus.

There were 58 people aboard the bus bound for Tuguegarao City when it left Manila, but police said passengers picked up along the way could have swelled the number to more than 60.

4 Russian troops killed in Tajik attack

MOSCOW (R) — Four Russian soldiers were killed in the former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan Monday when their armoured car was blown up by rebels firing from across the border in Afghanistan, Interfax News Agency said.

Several other soldiers were injured in the border attack, Interfax said. It gave no further details.

Russia has 25,000 troops in Tajikistan propping up the government against rebels, who fled after losing a civil war in 1992.

Earlier reports from the Tajik capital Dushanbe said six Russian servicemen had died over the New Year during drinking champagne probably spiked with cyanide.

This was the latest in a series of killings of Russian soldiers in the republic.

A senior Russian officer was killed in Dushanbe on New Year's Eve. A military source said at the weekend that Lieutenant-Colonel Vladimir Dolmatov, 37, was shot in the head.

President Imamat Rakhmonov said in a New Year address that illegal weapons would be confiscated and illegal armed groups disbanded to ease a threat of military conflict in Tajikistan.

Former premier publicly reveals Australia's worst kept secret

SYDNEY (AFP) — Bob Hawke, Australia's second longest-serving prime minister during what he termed "a love affair with the Australian people," has publicly revealed another love affair — with his biographer Blanche D'Alpuget.

Looking like a young couple much in love, the 65-year-old former Labour leader was pictured on the front pages of most newspapers here Tuesday strolling on a beach, arm-in-arm with the glamorous, blonde 51-year-old writer.

The posed photographs, in which they romantically hold hands and look into each other's eyes, provided public confirmation of a long-rumoured relationship just a month after Mr. Hawke announced he and his wife Hazel were separating after 38 years of marriage.

Tearfully, he said at the time that he and Hazel would remain "good friends."

The pictures were taken while Mr. Hawke and Ms. D'Alpuget were holidaying together at the New South

Wales beachside home of a mutual friend, a 90-year-old judge who was the subject of another biography by Ms. D'Alpuget.

She told a local newspaper reporter it was "wonderful to be on holiday together" and that she thought "1995 would be a very good year." He offered no comment, but agreed to the photographs.

As author of at least six successful books and many essays and articles, Ms. D'Alpuget shot to fame after her 1982 warts-and-all biography of Mr. Hawke, in which he was revealed as a womanising boozier.

They were characteristics to which he subsequently owned up in a number of celebrated tearful interviews.

But he stopped drinking in time for the March 1983 election which swept him to power and he went on to win a record four terms of office until being ousted in a party room coup by his former treasurer Paul Keating in December 1991.

Asked about Mr. Hawke's fondness for women during a

1989 interview, Ms. D'Alpuget said: "I think the reason for womanising, as far as I know, is testosterone."

She also helped Mr. Hawke write his own controversial autobiography, published last year, in which he alienated most of his former Labour colleagues with what was considered gratuitous criticism of Mr. Keating.

He described his relationship with Ms. D'Alpuget during the writing of his autobiography as "a sort of bond" which had developed between two attractive and intelligent people.

In June last year, she had admitted that she loved him "in a way," but a few months later described as "absolute nonsense" rumours of a relationship with Mr. Hawke.

In a recent magazine article about the relationship, Ms. D'Alpuget is said to have once boasted that as a teenager she went away with a Polish boyfriend with whom she made love 21 times in three days.

Colombia rebels knock peace hopes

BOGOTA (R) — Hopes for early peace talks to end Colombia's long-running guerrilla war took a knock when the country's biggest rebel group attacked the government for preaching peace but practising war.

President Ernesto Samper's five-month-old government has made peace with Colombia's estimated 10,000 Communist guerrillas a top priority but mistrust on both sides has held up progress and no date has yet been set for negotiations to begin.

The biggest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) said in a New Year message sent to radio stations that "if a political solution is really wanted the government must harmonise its words with its deeds."

"The decision of the Samper government to increase military spending, professionalise more soldiers, increase the number of helicopters and create new paramilitary groups is not exactly evidence of an official will for peace," the FARC said.

Mr. Samper hopes the rebels will be more inclined to negotiate a peace treaty with him because his government has pledged to boost social spending, improve health and education for the poorest Colombians, build 600,000 homes and create 1.5 million new jobs — all longstanding guerrilla priorities.

The president reiterated his hopes of progress on peace talks in a televised New

Year message, saying that "in 1995 we are going to try to see that peace stops being a dream and becomes a challenge and hopefully very soon a reality."

But the FARC statement dismissed government initiatives so far, saying they failed to attack the root of the social problems and amounted to little more than "charity handouts."

Referring to Mr. Samper's pledges to continue the economic modernisation and privatisation programme started by the previous government, the FARC said "the aggressive neo-liberal recipe continues to advance implacably while the percentage of poor grows... and the bank accounts of the oligarchy grow fat."

handicapped, scholarships for students, street cleaning, rural road development and urban housing.

It was not immediately clear how Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, would pay for the projects.

Willy Paul, a spokesman for the anti-Aristide paramilitary group FRAPH, was unimpressed as he listened to the broadcast.

"He (Aristide) is an eternal liar. He says the military will find jobs in the ministries. But Aristide's little guys are to de-Macoutes the government and they think all soldiers are Macoutes. What Aristide says in public is what he says in private," Mr. Paul said.

The Tonton Macoutes were the dreaded paramilitary wing of former Haitian dictator Francois Duvalier's administration and are widely believed responsible for the deaths of thousands of pro-democracy Haitians in the past three decades.

Aristide calls for peace, more food

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — In a speech marking the annual day of remembrance for heroes of the Haitian revolution, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide pleaded for peace Monday and called on his people to grow more food.

In the speech Mr. Aristide, who was ousted in a September 1991 coup and returned to power last October, tried to address the concerns of soldiers who will be out of work after a planned reduction in the Haitian Armed Forces.

He also outlined plans to build roads and other projects to create jobs and bolster Haiti's sagging economy.

"All Haitians must live in peace and liberty and not in fear. You can say what you want. No more living in hiding," Mr. Aristide said.

"If you are not in the army anymore, there is work for you in the public works, health, or agriculture ministries. You don't need to be afraid."

The Haitian government has announced plans to slash the military from 7,000 men to about 1,500. The plans have sparked a series of violent protests by soldiers.

"The time has come for rifles used for violence to turn into gardening tools to plant sweet potatoes and rice," he said in the 24-minute speech, broadcast live on National Radio and Television.

Speaking from his home in Tabar, outside Port-Au-Prince, Mr. Aristide stressed the need for agricultural development.

He detailed plans to reduce the price of seeds and fertilisers and said that Haiti had received \$5 million in foreign aid to buy farming tools.

"The more food that is produced, the lower the prices will go," he said.

"When there is hunger in the stomach, there is no peace in the head... peace is fertiliser for progress."

He also announced plans for reforestation, care of the

handicapped, scholarships for students, street cleaning, rural road development and urban housing.

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Clinton takes steps on anti-abortion violence

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (R) — President Bill Clinton Monday condemned violence against abortion clinics and ordered the U.S. Justice Department to set up a task force on clinic protection.

In a statement issued at the start of a brief vacation to visit friends and family back home in Little Rock, Mr. Clinton took care to note that people on both sides of the issue have "deeply felt beliefs," most of which are expressed peacefully.

Two people were killed and five injured at two abortion clinics near Boston last Friday, bringing to five the number of people shot to death in anti-abortion violence in less than two years.

A suspect, John Salvi, 22, has been detained in connection with the Boston slayings and a shooting incident at a separate clinic in Norfolk, Virginia over the New Year's weekend.

In his statement, Mr. Clinton said: "I applaud Americans of conscience who differ in their convictions on abortion but who stand united in their opposition to violence."

But he added: "A continued vigorous debate over abortion is proper. Violence against those who hold differing opinions is not."

Mr. Clinton said he had instructed Attorney General Janet Reno to head a task force of state, local and federal law enforcement officials to develop plans for clinic security. He also said the U.S. marshals would work with clinics so they would know what steps to take in case of potential threats.

"Today our commitment to the rule of law is being tested by those who believe that their opposition to abortion gives them the right to commit acts of violence, even murder, against their fellow

citizens who seek only to exercise their constitutional right to choose, or to assist others in exercising that right," he said.

In Boston, Cardinal Bernard Law, head of the city's Roman Catholic archdiocese, condemned the Massachusetts shootings and criticised those who sought to glorify the accused killer.

"I don't condone the killing as I don't condone abortion for the same reason, and that is that I hold every human life sacred," Cardinal Law said Monday night on local television. "I am convinced that violence begets violence."

Cardinal Law called for a moratorium on all protests at abortion clinics to give both sides time to cool off and rethink their positions.

On Sunday incoming Senate majority leader Bob Dole, a Kansas Republican,

also called for more federal action to stop the violence, including the possibility of using more federal marshals to protect vulnerable clinics.

"Now, whether we can protect every clinic in America is probably very highly questionable, but I think at the least, you know, let's take a look. Let's see what — if there's anything — else we can do to stop the violence," Sen. Dole said on CBS Television's Face the Nation.

Abortion rights activists last week accused federal law enforcement authorities of doing too little to control extremists who are threatening clinics, and stalking and harassing clinic doctors and other personnel. They demanded that the FBI and justice officials treat the violent strains of the anti-abortion movement as seriously as they would treat the Klan or a foreign terrorist group.

Tussle over Nizam jewels resolved

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A two-decade-long tussle over the jewellery owned by a former Indian royal family has come to an end with the government agreeing to buy the collection for \$72 million, a newspaper reported.

The government has until Jan. 16 to purchase the 173 pieces known as the Nizam jewels, owned by the former Nizam of Hyderabad, reputed in his lifetime to be the world's richest man, the Hindustan Times said.

The government and the heirs of the former Muslim ruler of Hyderabad state have been at loggerheads over the past two decades over the value of the jewels. The Nizam's heirs offered in 1972 to sell the jewellery to the government but they had been unable to fix a price on the collection, which includes the Jacob diamond, famous from Cartier and necklaces belonging to Napoleon's Josephine. India's princely states were abolished following independence in 1947.

Woman in miraculous train near-miss outside Lourdes

LOURDES, France (AFP) — A French motorist was thanking the heavens Monday after escaping unhurt when her car was crushed by a high-speed TGV train as she was on her way to Lourdes.

The 24-year-old woman was driving to the pilgrimage town in southwestern France from nearby Tarbes early Sunday, after spending New Year's Eve with friends, when she got stuck on a level crossing. Helped by a passing motorist she tried in vain to free the vehicle. The pair were still struggling with the dilemma when, minutes later, the Tarbes-Lourdes express roared into view at 110 kmh (70 mph). The woman was left to contemplate her luck as the train pushed the empty car for some 100 metres along the track, crushing it before coming to a stop.

Polish surgeon successfully re-attaches organ

WARSAW (R) — Surgeons in northeastern Poland have successfully re-attached the penis and testicles of a young man who had cut them off, state television said.

The patient, a 29-year-old man from the town of Zambrow, who had cut off his own genitals — both his penis and testicles — was rushed to the Bialystok Medical Academy where we decided to operate immediately," Professor Janusz Darewicz, the chief surgeon, said on television.

"The success of the operation was possible thanks to the quick-witted emergency-room doctor in Zambrow who placed the severed genitals in a jar full of saline solution and packed it in ice," Prof. Darewicz said.

Asked whether the organ would resume all its normal functions, he replied: "It's still too early to tell." The television did not say why he had mutilated himself.

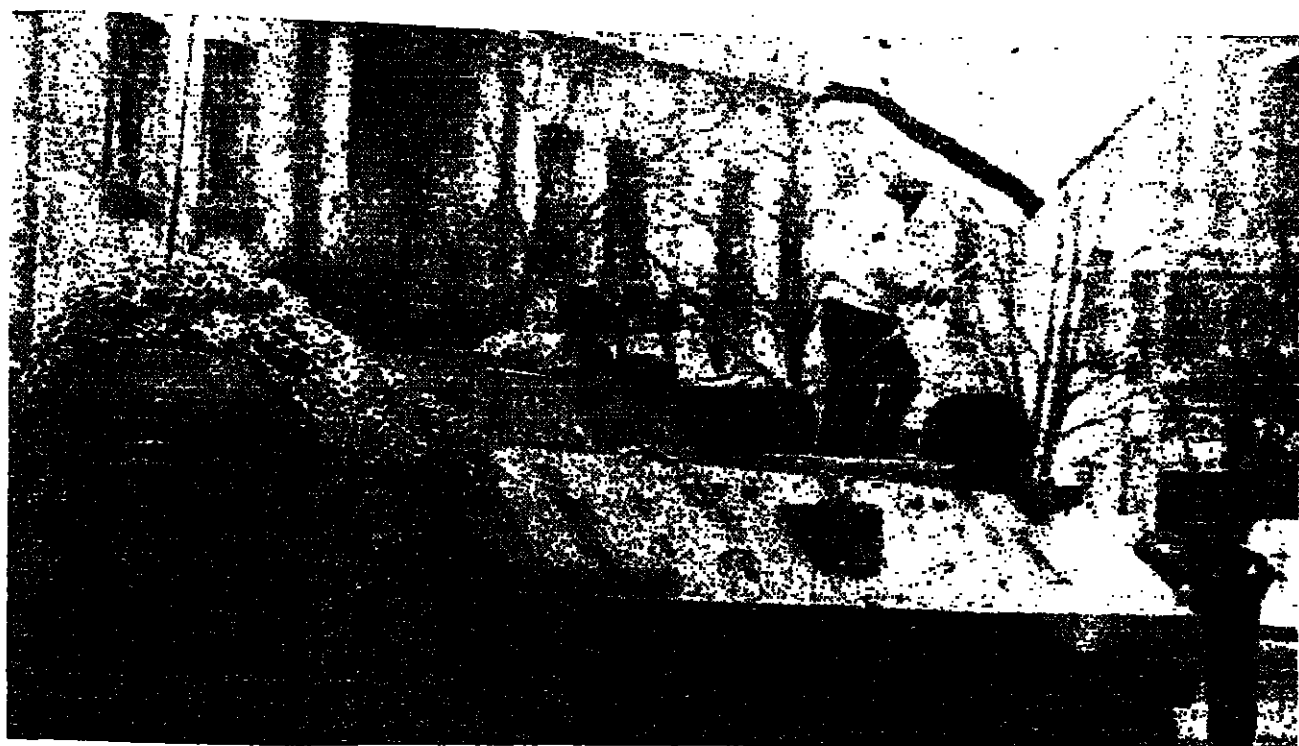
Experts try to save trapped Vanuatu dolphins

SYDNEY (R) — Marine experts and hundreds of volunteer helpers are racing against time in the tiny South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu to rescue 27 dolphins trapped and starving to death in a shallow lagoon.

One young dolphin died Tuesday afternoon as two Australian marine experts, backed by an enthusiastic band of local islanders and tourists, failed to herd the dolphins out of the lagoon using a human chain, a volunteer helper told Reuters by telephone from a nearby resort.

"The whole town has turned out today to try to help them," said Lynne Cowper, co-manager of the Erakor Island resort, which sits on a small island in the middle of the lagoon, near the Vanuatu capital, Port Vila.

"Anybody who had snorkles and fins... were linking their hands in a big human chain to drive them out, but they just would not go," she said. Earlier in the day, the two dolphin experts brought in by the Vanuatu government from Australia's Sea World Marine Park tried to free the dolphins by using a "curtain of sound," Sea World spokesman David Luxton told Reuters. The attempt involved 13 boats and 14 scuba divers.



A Chechen volunteer holding the national flag walks atop a Russian APC captured in Grozny, during the battle for the control of the capital of the breakaway Republic of Chechnya.

Chechnya throws Russian army into sharp relief

MOSCOW (AFP) — The lack of precision by Russian bombers in their attacks on the secessionist republic of Chechnya and the problems experienced by ground troops there fighting a vastly under-equipped enemy have thrown into sharp relief the current poor state of the Russian military machine.

The official Rossiya Vesti journal has admitted that the "precision of bombardments is more or less (only) metres, causing heavy losses and pointless destruction in the target area," confirming reports from inside the war theatre.

Inhabitants of the Chechen capital Grozny have seen nothing of the "laser-guided bombs which practically rule out any civilian victims," earlier promised by Russian officers.

The performance of Russian troops since they went into Chechnya three weeks ago have proved the country's former all-powerful

military machine is no longer what it was.

In the Red Army's glory days, the whole of the Soviet economy was tuned to defence interests, with the military sector accounting for 90 per cent of the national economy and defence expenditure accounting for 40 per cent of gross national product (GNP).

But times have changed since the Soviet Union was disbanded in 1991 and the economic crisis has forced the role of the defence sector to be scaled down.

That has led to a shrinking of finance for the army since 1992, while the overall defence budget — once equal to that of the United States — is now a mere five per cent of the U.S. equivalent.

As a consequence, the army scrapped innovation programmes and has virtually given up even updating its equipment, while hardware replacements shrank to the

Chechen sources claim to have routed Russian forces from Grozny while the Russian government said its troops continue to control a large part of the city (AFP photo)

extent the army placed an order for just one solitary tank in 1994, according to a Russian Security Council Commission report.

Lack of cash has forced the army to cut back on training its men and scrap manoeuvres.

"To hit targets accurately we would have to fly 200 hours per year," one pilot who had taken part in raids on Chechnya told a Russian newspaper last week. "This year, I have only flown 32 hours," he said.

Another problem for the army has been the fact that the demise of the Soviet Union left sections of the military and firms linked to it strewn all across the former Soviet empire, without recourse to subsidies to modernise or convert the structure or even to convert to production of quality civilian goods.

According to journalist Tatiana Leyva, "the country is now producing only six per

cent of the military goods it produced in 1991, and only 30 per cent of weapons provided for the army meet modern technological standards."

A government commission revealed in October that "the Russian armaments system as regards reconnaissance, data collection, the identification and destruction of targets now lags far behind that of its foreign partners."

In addition, research centres are in crisis, and units charged with testing new technology have virtually disappeared, so that innovations never reach the production stage.

Moreover, Geofisika, a huge aviation technology research centre in the Soviet era is virtually bankrupt," Mr. Leyva says. Its most qualified workers have left the centre which the government owes billions of roubles for completed orders.

With regard to the conventional arms sector, "almost 500 firms have completely or partially shut down production" in recent months, according to the Technical Commission's report.

"The military-industrial complex has kept its worn-out production lines even though they were economically deficient and technically obsolete," the report said. Beaten back by inexperienced Chechen volunteers, the Russian army will if nothing else have proved its case for needing an injection of capital investment.

"The necessary resources will be forthcoming and we will then once again have the best army in the world in the tradition of the great Russian military superpower," Russian Security Council Secretary Oleg Lobov insisted in an interview published on Dec. 30 by the Krasnaya Zvezda army journal.

While the polls have no direct bearing on the federal government, they are crucial for Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress Party, which suffered embarrassing losses in three of four states that held polls late last year.

Mr. Seshan's order is central to his controversial campaign to clean up Indian elections. To the chagrin of many party leaders, he has also curbed political advertising and capped candidates'

spending. One of the states, Bihar, is badly behind schedule and appears unlikely to meet the identity-card deadline. As of Jan. 1, cards had been issued to no more than 450,000 voters in Bihar of a total electorate of 58 million.

On Tuesday, Mr. Seshan gave Bihar some breathing room, extending a deadline for it to print the cards by six weeks to February 28. But he said that we the only extension Bihar would get.

The other states, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa, are further advanced in the laborious and costly process, but by no means guaranteed to meet Mr. Seshan's demand.

If Mr. Seshan scrapped elections, President Shankar Dayal Sharma would have to impose direct rule from New Delhi. That would deny the opposition Janata Dal Party, which has accused Mr. Seshan of working "hand in

glove" with Congress, a chance to recapture power in two states they now control, Bihar and Orissa.

Three states have asked the Supreme court to strike down Mr. Seshan's order, claiming the Election Commission has no right to take the unprecedented step of depriving voters of their constitutional right to elections.

On Tuesday the Supreme court turned down a request that it temporarily stay Mr. Seshan's order as it relates to Bihar, and set a hearing on the case for Jan. 16.

Mr. Seshan has held his ground, saying it will be better not to hold elections in Bihar if they are not free and fair.

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"But surely a man of his

U.N. reports serious clashes around Bosnia town

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Serious clashes erupted around the northwestern Bosnian town of Velika Kladusa Tuesday despite a comprehensive ceasefire agreed by the warring factions over the weekend, the United Nations reported.

U.N. Major Hervé Gourmelon said 78 shells fell on the region, supplemented by a large number of small arms rounds.

"It's a little disturbing because there is no particular reason for the flareup in military activity," he said.

The source of the firing and its effects were not immediately clear.

Maj. Gourmelon added that U.N. officials were trying to determine if the violence was continuing in the region, where forces loyal to dissident Muslim leader Fikret Abdic — backed by rebel Serbs from neighbouring Croatia — had been confronting mainly — Muslim government troops.

Mr. Abdic Saturday signed an agreement with local Un-

ited Nations military authorities to respect a global four-month truce in Bosnia, which was formally accepted the same day by government and rebel Bosnian Serb leaders.

The truce took effect at 1100 GMT Sunday.

U.N. negotiators have since then been pressing Serbs based in the Krajina region of Croatia to respect the cessation of hostilities.

Around Sarajevo meanwhile Bosnian government troops began pulling out of strategic territory above the capital in accordance with the overall truce and are expected to complete the operation by mid-day Wednesday, an army spokesman announced.

U.N. military authorities are then scheduled to inspect the area, part of a demilitarized zone near Krupac on Mount Igman south of here.

The withdrawal would represent the first tangible shift in confrontation lines under the cessation of hostilities, which calls notably for a separation of forces and

eventually the interpositioning of United Nations troops between opposing armies.

Agreement on the withdrawal came Monday in a U.N.-chaired meeting at Sarajevo Airport of Bosnian government and Serb officials.

The mainly-Muslim Bosnian army incurred the wrath of the United Nations here in October when it launched an offensive against Serb units on Mount Igman and entered territory that had been declared a demilitarized zone in August 1993.

The army agreed to pull back but a Bosnian military spokesman said Tuesday that "withdrawal is conditional on U.N. monitoring of the Hrasnica-Igman Road," which is located to the east of Krupac and is the only route connecting Sarajevo with the rest of government-controlled Bosnia.

U.N. officials Monday said they hoped to be able to deploy between confrontation lines throughout Bosnia

by the end of January.

Sarajevo Airport, a vital aid gateway for the Bosnian capital's 380,000 people, was reopened Tuesday three days after shutting down when an aircraft skidded off the runway, a U.N. spokesman said.

The U.N. expected to bring in a total of 28 humanitarian and military resupply flights Tuesday.

In Paris, the Defence Ministry said French soldiers had worked since Saturday to clear and repair the runway to allow the quick resumption of relief flights.

None of the 11 passengers and crew aboard a U.N. Ilyushin 76 cargo plane were hurt when it smashed into a mud bank next to the runway after landing in snowy weather Saturday. Work on removing the plane was continuing Tuesday.

Since the warring parties agreed to a new four-month ceasefire which came into effect on Jan. 1, life in Sarajevo has shown signs of improvement.

Berlusconi suffers new setback in opinion poll

ROME (R) — A new opinion poll showed most Italians do not want Silvio Berlusconi to become prime minister again as survivors of his coalition met Tuesday to discuss whether to continue insisting on a snap general election.

The poll showed that Mr. Berlusconi's popularity was taking a battering at the hands of anti-graft Judge Antonio Di Pietro, the symbol of Italy's drive to eradicate corruption, and neo-fascist leader Gianfranco Fini.

The Director Research Organisation poll showed that 68.8 per cent of Italians would choose corruption-busting Judge Di Pietro as opposed to only 31.2 per cent for Mr. Berlusconi if they could vote directly for a prime minister.

Premiers are now named by the president. Judge Di Pietro, who resigned last month complaining of political interference in corruption probes, has been

tested as a candidate to succeed Mr. Berlusconi as prime minister but most political commentators consider him a long shot.

The same poll asked Italians to rate the performance of Mr. Berlusconi, Mr. Fini and President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro on a scale of one to 10. They gave Mr. Berlusconi only 5.4 as opposed to 6.5 for Mr. Scalfaro and 6.1 for Mr. Fini.

Mr. Fini, whose National Alliance is part of Mr. Berlusconi's coalition, began outstripping the prime minister in opinion polls last October.

Members of the coalition, which collapsed last month when the Northern League withdrew, met to discuss strategy ahead of a session Wednesday with President Scalfaro, now in a second round of talks to end the crisis.

Tuesday's newspapers were rife with speculation that Mr. Scalfaro could give

the mandate to Mr. Berlusconi's Treasury Minister Lamberto Dini, a former director-general of the Bank of Italy and an internationally respected bureaucrat.

The candidacy of Mr. Dini, who has no direct party affiliation, was floated Monday by Defence Minister Cesare Previti, coordinator of Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and a close aide of the outgoing prime minister.

Massimo D'Alema, head of the opposition Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), has indicated his group could support Mr. Dini or someone from Forza Italia as interim prime minister if there was agreement that he would lead a broad-based government.

Mr. D'Alema said such a government would have to last at least a year and "mandated to conclude pending electoral and economic reform before the country votes again."

Mr. Berlusconi and his

allies have put pressure on Mr. Scalfaro to dissolve parliament, saying a snap election would be the only honourable way to resolve the crisis. Mr. Berlusconi wants the elections to be held on March 26.

But in the past week, Mr. Berlusconi, 58-year-old media mogul, has effectively withdrawn his demand that he and his caretaker government lead the country to early elections.

Most of Mr. Berlusconi's political opponents, including centrist and leftist groups and the League are opposed to early elections.

Going into the meeting with Mr. Berlusconi, Mr. Fini said his group still wanted elections at the end of March.

But Alberto Michellini, "who belongs to a small centre grouping that supports the coalition, said coalition members might agree to elections later than March if the next prime minister was someone who represented Forza Italia.

Indian constitutional crisis looms over poll order

NEW DELHI (R) — India is locked in a constitutional wrangle over a tough-talking election commissioner's threat to cancel polls in five states unless millions of voters are given identity cards.

Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan has ordered the states to print photo identity cards for the more than 100 million voters due to elect state assemblies starting next month. Results were set to be announced in March.

While the polls have no direct bearing on the federal government, they are crucial for Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress Party, which suffered embarrassing losses in three of four states that held polls late last year.

Mr. Seshan's order is central to his controversial campaign to clean up Indian elections. To the chagrin of many party leaders, he has also curbed political advertising and capped candidates'

spending. One of the states, Bihar, is badly behind schedule and appears unlikely to meet the identity-card deadline. As of Jan. 1, cards had been issued to no more than 450,000 voters in Bihar of a total electorate of 58 million.

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glove" with Congress, a chance to recapture power in two states they now control, Bihar and Orissa.

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On Tuesday the Supreme court turned down a request that it temporarily stay Mr. Seshan's order as it relates to Bihar, and set a hearing on the case for Jan. 16.

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"His messianic zeal to cleanse the system may have prevented him from seeing the practical difficulties in executing his decree," the Times Of India said in an editorial.

"But surely a man of his

experience should know only too well that intrusiveness on this sensitive issue can lead to an unprecedented constitutional crisis," it said.

"The right course for the chief election commissioner is to hold the assembly polls without I-cards," the Hindustan Times said.

Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav said identity cards were part of an "international conspiracy" by multinational companies itching to make money on supplying cameras, film, halogen lights and computers, which are required to produce the cards.

"A poor country like India could hardly afford to squander away public money in such avoidable tasks," Mr. Yadav said.

"We shall not only move the highest court of the land, but our people will also rise in rebellion against the dictatorial attitude of Mr. Seshan so that democracy does not slip away from our hands," he said.

Kim Jong-Il is in total control — ambassador

Kim Jong-Il is in total control — ambassador

BEIJING (AFP) — The North Korean Ambassador to China said Friday that Kim Jong-Il was in total control of the country, despite his failure to deliver an annual nationwide address at the New Year.

"Kim Jong-Il is the supreme leader of our party, the state and the army," Ambassador Chun Chang-jun told reporters here, adding that the New Year's address — a tradition started by Mr. Kim's late father Kim Il-Sung — had been replaced by a long editorial carried by major North Korean newspapers.

"The joint editorial... is in accordance with the intentions of the Dear Leader Kim Jong-Il," the ambassador said.

The delay in Mr. Kim's succession to his father's titles as president and ruling party chief has fuelled speculation of a power struggle in the North involving the armed forces. There have also been rumours that Mr. Kim might be seriously ill.

However, Mr. Chu stressed that "strengthening the military around Kim Jong-Il" would be a top national priority in 1995.

North Koreans appear to still be in mourning for President Kim Il-Sung, with many visiting his statues to

pay their respects, the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Tuesday.

Visiting the statues over New Year, they "made deep bows, looking back with yearning on the life of the president," KCNA said in a report quoted by the leader.

The fatherly leader endeavoured till the last moments of his life to feed and clothe our people better," Kim Jong-Bae, vice-director of the production department of the State Agricultural Commission, was quoted by KCNA as saying.

The president died on July 8 last year.

Meanwhile many South Koreans regard the United States as the country most likely to help unify Korea and favour a continued presence of U.S. troops in the South, according to a poll published Tuesday.

At the same time, Japan topped the list of potential opponents to the unification of Korea, with 81.6 per cent of those questioned believing the former colonial ruler would be against such a move.

The survey of 1,000 people by the World Research Institute also revealed widespread concern over Japan's perceived arms buildup, with 63.3 per cent saying it could

eventually pose a military threat to the peninsula.

Some 85.1 per cent believed that the United States would be the most influential country in the drive towards reunification, followed by China with 60.9 per cent, Japan with 52.4 per cent and Russia with 40.4 per cent.

The poll, commissioned by Yonhap News Agency, also revealed that 57.6 per cent saw the United States as the most supportive country to move towards one Korea.

But 98 per cent said Washington should hold prior consultations with South Korea before making any compromise deals with Pyongyang.

In the poll, 65 per cent praised the U.S. for freezing nuclear facilities in the North, believing the U.S.-North Korea nuclear accord in October has eased tension by easing the reclusive North towards gradual opening.

In a separate development, a Seoul government spokesman said Tuesday South Korea this month will officially launch a team to support the provision of light-water reactors worth some \$4 billion to North Korea.

"We expect the team to be launched by the middle of this month," said a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

The team, whose chief has

yet to be named, will be composed of four divisions — policy coordination, international cooperation, financial support, and construction and technology.

Division chiefs will come from the National Unification Board, Finance and Economy Board, Foreign Ministry and Trade and Industry Ministry, the spokesman told AFP.

An advisory commission to the team is also slated for formation, comprising officials from the defence, environment, science and technology ministries.

Under a landmark deal in Geneva last October, North Korea will receive two light-water reactors for power generation from the West in return for neutralising suspect nuclear programme.

An international consortium, the Korea Energy Development Organisation (KEDO), is due to be launched in February to provide the North with two 1,000-megawatt reactors. The cost of the project has been put at \$4 billion.

Aside from South Korea, which will shoulder the bulk of the financial burden, the United States, Japan, China, Russia and several other Western countries are expected to join the consortium.



Russian soldiers prepare their weapons at a check point on the border between Chechnya and Dagestan (AFP photo)

Police: British horror suspect committed suicide

LONDON (R) — Frederick West, the suspected serial killer at the centre of Britain's notorious "house of horrors" case, hanged himself, a police post-mortem examination confirmed Tuesday.

Mr. West, accused of murdering 12 young women and girls, was found dead in his prison cell Sunday.

Villagers in the idyllic rural backwater of Much Marcle, where Mr. West once lived, do not want him to be buried there alongside his mother and father in the local graveyard.

"He has taken his secrets

to the grave and we don't want those secrets buried here. It would become a macabre tourist attraction," said one resident of the west of England village.

Mr. West, whose home in the western England town of Gloucester was dubbed "the house of horrors" after police dug up human remains there, had been taken off a special prison suicide watch after being assessed as safe.

Security was strengthened around his wife Rosemary, who has been accused along with her husband of nine of the murders.

Police officers said the

door to her cell was being left open at night and a warden was sitting outside to watch her.

Police said the case against Rosemary West "remained active" but her lawyer said she should be released for lack of evidence.

Leo Gostley said the case against Rosemary was flimsy. He claimed Frederick had made a candid admission in a police interview and had said his wife was innocent of complicity.

After lurid coverage of Frederick West's case was splashed across several pages of British tabloid newspa-

pers, lawyers questioned whether it was now possible for Rosemary West to be guaranteed a fair trial.

Frederick West's lawyer, Tony Miles, said the coverage had shocked him.

"I am appalled by the coverage in some of the tabloids. I think it just raises fundamental issues as to the responsibility of the press in this country in relation to a case of this kind," he said.

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, a former chairman of the Press Council media watchdog, said: "There will be great difficulty, if not impossibility, in her getting a fair trial."

fighting equipment as well as a dearth of laws and lax enforcement of fire prevention regulations.

He warned that many tall buildings, underground projects, oil and petrochemical facilities and public places were still fire hazards, the newspaper said.

A fire that swept through a ballroom in the central Chinese city of Nanjing, killing two people, seriously injuring four and destroying the building at the weekend occurred after local Fire Department warnings that the dance hall was unsafe, state radio said.

A fire in November in the northeastern city of Jilin killed two people in a disco and spread to the provincial museum next door, destroying the 70-million-year-old fossil of an 11-metre-long dinosaur and several other rare items.

The museum had rented out space to the disco, which failed to take adequate fire precautions. Eighteen officials, including the city mayor, have been punished.

40,000 fires killed 2,600 people in China in 1994

BEIJING (R) — Some 40,000 fires killed more than 2,600 people and injured 4,000 in China in 1994 in the deadliest year on record, and Beijing Tuesday promised tough action in 1995 to prevent such disasters.

"Fire disasters in 1994 were particularly serious," state radio said in a year-end report.

The number of fires and the death and injury toll did not include forest fires, it said.

Officials said the year was the deadliest on record and promised implementation of tougher regulations in 1995 with offenders to face stiff punishment.

Property losses for 1994 were estimated at a record 1.2 billion yuan (\$141 million), the radio said. Most of the fires were in factories but fires in entertainment places increased rapidly, it said.

Major and disastrous fires soared by 28.2 compared with 1993, the radio said.

One-quarter of the deaths along with a fourth of all fires were sparked in places of

entertainment.

Several thousand entertainment halls across China have been closed in response to an emergency directive of the State Council, China's cabinet, in December ordering priority for fire prevention measures and immediate closure of substandard establishments.

The cabinet order followed China's deadliest fire in 15 years in which 325 people, 288 of them children, were killed on Dec. 8 when flames engulfed a cinema hall in the northwestern oil town of Karamay during a cultural show.

Nineteen officials have been arrested or punished in connection with the Karamay inferno.

A nationwide construction spree in which builders ignored fire safety precautions in favour of cost-cutting and speed was partly to blame for the heavy toll, it said.

Many buildings used highly inflammable materials for decorations with poorly de-

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Serious matter

THE MINISTRY of Energy seems to be heading, in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to introduce nuclear energy and nuclear energy use into the country. The IAEA, according to ministry officials, has so far pumped \$2 million into the 8-year-old project that aims at establishing an experimental reactor before the end of the century. The total cost of the project would amount to \$13 million. "Most of the cost would be borne by the treasury," one official from the ministry was quoted as saying.

Among the many uses of the reactor and the associated nuclear centre is research on agricultural products, medical applications and training of nuclear contamination clearing teams. This is fine. Although nuclear research findings are being made available by the more advanced in the field, Jordan could probably make studies on its own products in order to improve yields or fight certain types of pest. The Kingdom, also situated next door to a nuclear armed country, should train its own teams to clear nuclear contamination. The country in this advanced age also needs to use the application of nuclear energy in the field of medicine.

However, three issues should figure high in the minds of those who plan, supervise and execute this project. One is cost, two is safety and three is the fact that Jordan is not in need of such an expensive and lethal source of energy.

We need to remember that the expenses of such a project, once put in motion, will be difficult to control. The cost of both the soft and hardware components of nuclear facilities is prohibitive. Planning as such might not be, but the training of staff, which can only be done abroad, is extremely expensive.

On the other hand, the location of the reactor in the environs of Amman or close to the Jordan Valley and the seismological rift, makes it extremely dangerous for the inhabitants of the capital in case of an earthquake or a nuclear leak. It is therefore most advisable that such a project be built in the eastern desert away from the population centres and the earthquake zone.

In addition, Jordan which plans to satisfy all of its electric energy for already planned projects can ill afford to produce electricity from an expensive process like capital-intensive nuclear power. The Kingdom has been negotiating with neighbouring countries to link electrical grids which should take care of the country's needs well into the 21st century.

Nuclear energy and nuclear applications are a serious matter that should not be ventured into unless all aspects of the issue are debated and a near consensus is reached on their resolution.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR daily Tuesday demanded that the Russians immediately halt their attacks on Chechnya and its capital Grozny. The battles that raged inside the Chechen capital have proved that the Russian invaders are facing a long and ferocious war inside the city with the Chechen fighters proving to be skilful in warfare, said the paper. The Chechens have risen to the occasion and met the Russian challenge despite the disadvantage in men and equipment, said the paper. But the Chechens are defending their own homeland and that gives them courage to pursue their fight against the invaders, said the paper. There is no doubt that the Russians who are invading Chechnya are motivated by the wishful thinking of reviving the old dreams of the Russian empire but their dreams are being dashed away by the heroic and daring resistance by the Chechen people, added the paper. We sincerely hope that the legendary resistance of the Chechens will force the Moscow government to change its stand and we also hope that the Western nations would interfere and save the lives of the civilian population, said the paper.

THE OSLO agreement between Israel and the Palestinians has obviously opened the door for Israel to reach the depth of the Arab World and win the favour of the whole world, said a columnist in Al Ra'i. The Israelis were even accorded unusual welcome at Casablanca conference and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's speech was applauded warmly by the Arab and Muslim delegates, said Al-Rai. Instead of returning the favour, Israel has closed and continues to close the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, preventing the Palestinians from earning their livelihoods and continuing the process of building Jewish settlements on Arab land, said the writer. Instead of showing a sign of tolerance, the Israelis are continually exercising repressive measures against the Palestinians.

Human Rights File

Criminals must be punished

IN A recent criminal case, a man received a one-year sentence for killing his sister in the name of family honour. This sentence and many similar ones, meted year in and year out in this country, are still taking place in the mid-nineties when we are all on the threshold of the 21st century. These anomalies are also occurring at a time when we all pride ourselves as nationals of a modern state that is trying to become a full-fledged member of the democratic club. Since the so-called crimes of honour belong to a bygone era that befits more the times of "Jahiliya" or days of darkness, it is high time that they are addressed straight in the face by both the public and private sectors of our society.

To be sure, crimes of passion are common features of most societies in the world. Crimes involving the taking of lives and committed in the heat of emotions are commonly treated as second degree murders and their perpetrators usually receive punishments that don't call for the capital penalty. There is a near universal rule of the thumb on such crimes that regards them as less painful for society than premeditated murder committed with malice and aforethought as the criminal law jargon goes about describing it. Yet the kind of honour crimes that take place in our country are by and large committed with malice and aforethought.

Still our court system dishes out punishments on the "killers" as if they are even less than second degree murders and at the end the fathers or brothers or husbands, who commit these crimes get scot-free for all intents and purposes. There is an abominable human rights issue here that is not confined to the right to life per se but extends to discrimination against women by making them easy prey to precipitous accusations that end up being ill-founded in the first place.

It so happens that our legislation incriminates sexual relations outside the institution of marriage. Our criminal code is clear on the unlawfulness of sexual contacts outside the bondage of marriage and punishes the guilty irrespec-

tive of their sex. This is not to mention our religion and traditions that frown on extramarital relations and prohibit them in the clearest possible terms. Yet neither our body of laws on such subjects nor our religion tolerate the taking of the law into our hands by taking the lives of members of our families in cold blood. The tragedy is compounded by the fact that in so many cases the "murdered" person is not guilty of the charge in the first place.

What is most disturbing about this continuous phenomenon is the observation that the various governments in this country have opted to stay away from the issue and treated it as simply too hot to touch. Parliament has likewise preferred to stay aloof from this major social problem by ignoring it altogether and by never allowing its inclusion on its agenda. The same or identical treatment has been given to the so-called tribal justice where the innocent members of one tribe ends up paying for the wrongdoings of other members of his tribe. This callous administration of justice goes on also before our eyes without as much arousing the faintest concern from our people. Thank God the ministers of interior and justice have finally spoken up on this subject and promised much awaited action. How can we still call ourselves a modern state or a country that faithfully respects human rights and stands out as a primary champion of humanitarianism across the board when such atrocities go on being perpetrated in the most callous manner. Where is the human right of the girl or woman killed in cold blood in the name of "honour" or the human right of the man whose blood was equally shed in cold blood as some kind of retribution for the shedding of the blood of a man who belonged to another tribe. Something woefully archaic about these practices that blemish the country's commitment to human right and respect for the rule of law. Isn't it high time that we all did something about these two manifestations of social disorder. If time is indeed ripe for doing something about them, shouldn't the government spearhead the national effort for their eradication first from our minds and then from our practices and traditions.

By Waleed Sa'idi

Clinton's bible, Goldstein's hermeneutics

By Michael Prior

GOD OCCUPIES the high moral ground even in societies in which there is little more than lip-service paid to him. Nothing compares with having him on one's side. On the White House lawn in September 1993, President Bill Clinton introduced the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians, saying that both people pledged themselves to a shared future, shaped by the values of the Torah, the Koran and the Bible. Both President Clinton's and Premier Yitzhak Rabin speeches referred to the Bible, while Chairman Yasser Arafat began his with the traditional Muslim invocation of Allah. The Bible is a significant source-book in the confused concept of the Judeo-Christian tradition, while Muslims look to the Koran for divine guidance. President Clinton, fearing that his speech required more work, had been unable to sleep on the night before the signing. He woke at 3 a.m. and reached for his Bible. He read the Book of Joshua and portions of the New Testament. The Washington Post report does not reveal whether the president was able to sleep after the blood-curdling lecture from Joshua, nor, if so, whether he suffered any violent dreams! In any case, his mode of address later in the day was a mixture of bible-based exhortation in the Baptist tradition and shrewd political manoeuvring. As if to consolidate the U.S.'s self-portrayal as an honest broker, the biblical imagery of his speech was supplemented by a quotation from the Koran.

The Hebrew massacre of Feb 25, 1994 made the Arafat-Rabin handshake and the high hopes of the September declaration look like romantic memories. Britain's Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sachs, expressed shock and grief at the massacre: "Violence is evil. Violence committed in the name of God is doubly evil. Violence against those engaged in worshipping God is unspeakably evil." Mr. Rabin told the Knesset that Baruch Goldstein and his followers were a foreign implant and an errant weed. "Sensible Judaism," he declared, "spits you out. You are a shame on Zionism and an embarrassment to Judaism." Fine words, but what about much of the Book of Deuteronomy, the Book of Joshua and, in particular, the Book of Esther, the prescribed biblical reading for the Jewish festival of Purim?

The five-man enquiry into the Hebrew massacre concluded that Dr. Goldstein acted alone, and its 338-page report exonerates the Israeli government and army command of any responsibility for the murder of the Palestinian worshippers in the mosque. It concedes that security was lax — five soldiers, three of whom had overslept, had failed to turn up for duty — but there was no question of any collusion between

settlers and the army. In any case, the biblicalism of the settlers will go unchecked, and Mr. Rabin promised to install metal detectors to prevent arms being brought into mosques in future.

Contrary to the initial reports, Goldstein was no ordinary man whose mental state the tensions of the area had triggered into a moment of insanity. He was steeped in the Bible, and would have surpassed even President Clinton in having his mind shaped by the values of the Torah. It is highly likely that his bedtime reading for Purim, which occurred on the 14th day of the month of Adar, was from the Book of Esther, the biblical text which celebrates the fight-back of Jews.

The Book of Esther

We learn from that book that King Ashaserus (Xerxes) too could not sleep on the eve of Queen Esther's banquet, and called for the annals to be brought and read to him. Xerxes' nocturnal reading led to a bad outcome for Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and, subsequently, for many more of their enemies, near and far. Goldstein would have read how, with divine approval, the Jews could avenge their enemies on the appropriate date (subsequently in the story of Purim). Details follow in chapter nine: "The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword... five hundred men in the citadel of Susa alone," and that, on hearing the good news, Queen Esther asked the king for an extension of his decree for the morrow also. On the 14th day of the month of Adar, the Jews killed 300 men in the city. It is a small mercy that the avenging Jews of the Book of Esther took a day off on the 15th day of the month.

Goldstein would have read that things were even worse outside Susa. On the 13th day of the month the Jews slaughtered 15,000. Mercifully, the Jews of the province rested and feasted on the 14th day. Xerxes ordered for the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar an annual commemoration of the days on which Jews had rid themselves of their enemies, had their sorrow turned into gladness and mourning into a holiday. Jews were to exchange presents and give gifts to the poor.

Goldstein's biblical hermeneutics, alas, went further, and authorised a one-man re-enactment of the legendary slaughter, apparently sanctioned by God's word. It is no wonder, then, that Rabbi Ya'acov Perrin, one of the religious leaders in Goldstein's settlement in Kiryat Arba, eulogising him at his funeral, declared, "one million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail," and another mourner declared Goldstein to be "the greatest Jew alive." Some of the more dubious values of the Torah, and the Books of Joshua and

Esther, had come back to haunt the civilised world, and, in his own circle of like-minded biblical interpretation, Goldstein was on the verge of canonisation.

However, he is not alone in a literalist interpretation of the Bible. Such literalism has justified the butchering of people in the Crusades and in North and South America in the past, supports the expulsion and humiliation of Palestinians in the present, and has given divine approval for various other dehumanising regimes elsewhere.

The Bible poses a fundamental moral problem for anyone who takes it at face value. There is no shortage of post-biblical texts, within both Judaism and Christianity, which point to its alleged divine origins. Goldstein would surely have known his Mishnah which in its tract, the Sanhedrin, states that all Israelites have a share in the world to come except "those who assert that the Torah is not from heaven". The Torah, in a crude interpretation, must be accepted in its totality, and in all its parts.

The Torah, however, is fundamentally rooted in the escape from Egypt of the Hebrew slaves, who entered and occupied a land which was already occupied by others. The occupation of another people's land realistically demands systematic pillage and killing. What distinguishes the biblical account of this activity is that it is presented as having not only divine approval, but as happening at the command of God. This presentation of God as a monster gloating over the destruction of others must be rejected out of hand by any one who presumes that the conduct of an ethical God, at the very least, will not fall lower than that of ordinary secular decency.

Encounter with the contemporary political realities of the Holy Land raises important questions for students of the Bible. The commandment: "You shall destroy all the peoples that the Lord your God will give over to you, your eye shall not pity them" (Deut 7:16), and the statement that "The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little... and you shall make their name perish from under heaven" (Deut. 7:22-24), are seen in a new light, when one meets the Palestinians, the modern counterparts of the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. In our society such biblical sentiments, rightly, would be regarded as an incitement to racial hatred. On moral grounds, one is forced to question whether the Torah continues to provide divine legitimacy for the occupation of other people's land, and their virtual annihilation. By any reasonable standards, the first five books of the Old Testament are seen to contain racist

and xenophobic sentiments. They promote an attitude of ethnic centrism, which appears to receive the highest possible legitimacy in the form of divine approval.

Contemporary liberation theologues, like all theologues, look to the Bible for their underpinning. It is not difficult to discern within the Old Testament a whole range of themes which fit the concept of liberation very comfortably (e.g. liberation from oppression in Egypt, Babylon etc.). However, does God, who is on the side of the oppressed Israelites, and who frees them from Egypt, remain on their side when they become the oppressor? If the Bible is looked to as a theological basis for liberation theology elsewhere, the sad reality is that in its place of origin it has become an equally well founded basis for a theology of oppression.

Anyone with moral sensitivities, and concern for the dignity of other peoples, must reject the kind of biblical which sees the core of biblical revelation to be frozen in the primitive concepts of Chosen People and Promised Land. The biblical claim of the divine gift of land is integrally linked with the claim of divine approval for the barbarous extermination of the indigenous people (e.g. Deut 20:16-18). It would be a far more ethical hermeneutical stance to recognise in the biblical legend the attribution to God of his approval for the de facto Israelite possession of the land, and the extermination of the inhabitants, whose presence was an obstacle to the accomplishments of that command.

Neither the book of Joshua, nor the book of Esther is the best distraction for a person transfixed between wakefulness and sleep. They should not be accorded a favoured place in the search for moral exhortation. Hotel managers may need to censor their guests' Bibles, lest their clients be driven to appalling behaviour in the wake of sleepless nights spent reading the more racist, xenophobic and militaristic elements within the biblical text.

President Clinton may well have had the Hebrew prophetic tradition in mind as he appealed to the Bible. For any religious Jews, however, the noble traditions of the Hebrew prophets, which are the favourites of Christians, are of secondary importance when compared with the Torah. Since there is little hope, therefore, that the modest moral exhortations of the Fourth Geneva Convention could ever displace the divinely sanctioned, and often divinely mandated, decrees of some of the traditions of the Torah, we can only hope that Prime Minister Rabin's moral detectors will be in place before Purim next year.

Middle East International.

Moscow's image of Chechens smacks of Soviet-style propaganda

By Anatoly Verbin
Reuters

SAMASHKI, Russia — For an ordinary Muscovite a Chechen usually means ruthless gangster, an image cultivated by the Kremlin in its attempt to end to Chechnya's independence drive.

Chechens do control some of Russia's most ruthless criminal gangs. But gangsters are notably absent from the crowds fighting Russian troops trying to capture the regional capital Grozny.

It is mostly ordinary people who are killed in Russian air raids and it is ordinary citizens who mostly man Chechen positions.

They have little in common with the image of "illegal armed bands" created by Russian officials, which is coming to look increasingly like the old Soviet propaganda machine.

Nor do the Russian soldiers freezing in the fields of Chechnya resemble the bloodthirsty monsters described in the propaganda of Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Most of them have little information and even less motivation to die in a war which they believe is not theirs.

Both sides keep killing each other and one result of the conflict appears to be clear already — Russia's awkward attempt to end Chechnya's independence bid has revived the north Caucasian peoples' centuries-old mistrust of Moscow.

Chechens fought the Russian empire's advance in the Caucasus for decades in the last century and when President Boris Yeltsin sent troops into Chechnya on Dec. 11, it simply opened a new chapter in hostilities.

Whoever worked out with Mr. Yeltsin, the decision to send troops into

Chechnya clearly had little idea of the traditions and spirit of the Chechen people.

Mr. Dudayev's propaganda also skillfully uses memories of 1944 when Soviet dictator Josef Stalin deported the entire Chechen population to central Asia for more than a decade, accusing them of collaborating with Nazi invaders.

Many Chechens would agree that Mr. Dudayev has trained Chechnya. Many of them are bitter about the vast sums which have come from local oil refineries and disappeared. Mr. Dudayev had promised to use the money to buy arms which never materialised.

Instead, Mr. Dudayev's closest allies spent their time building huge palaces and rumours about about the huge fortune which he has accumulated in foreign banks.

By the time Russian troops rolled into Chechnya, its once booming industry was at a standstill, salaries and pensions had not been paid for months and popular discontent was on the rise.

For most Chechens, Mr. Dudayev does not seem to matter any more.

"With or without Dudayev, we are going to fight for our own land," many say. "Yeltsin has threatened us by threatening the security of our homes, which is the most sacred thing for any Chechen."

Fear is forbidden for Chechen men and Russian air raids on Grozny do not seem to have impressed the local population, at least those who stayed. Chechen men at war do not drink alcohol or shave.

Chechens in Samashki, about 40-km west of Grozny, said they had not reached the stage of declaring their own all-out holy war against the Russians.

Many challenges ahead for S. Africa

By Rory Channing
Reuters

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa heads into 1995 savouring its hard-won democracy but with an economy firing on too few cylinders to offer much more to the black majority, so far than the vote.

Economic analysts report more good news than bad on an economy that during the past year has crept out of its longest recession in record. But daunting challenges lie ahead.

There is increasing recognition that South Africa's Chamber of Business said. Amid the inevitable disruptions up to and beyond April's historic all-race elections, the economy failed to gather the momentum many had hoped for as democracy dawned.

Economists estimate economic growth for 1994 at two per cent, which is almost double the rate achieved last year but only half that of the more optimistic forecasts made early this year and still less population growth.

The economy is a mixed bag of a worrisome agricultural sector, a mining sector in the doldrums, but a manufacturing sector showing distinct signs of stirring and reaching out to the levels of pre-recession 1990," said independent economist Edward Osborn.

A number of financial houses predict the growth tempo will quicken to 3.5 per cent in 1995, encouraging a platform for the healthiest cycle in many years.

The relatively peaceful transition from white minority rule and the post-apartheid government's repeated commitment to fiscal and monetary discipline and to developing investment-friendly policies have boosted business confidence.

However, with the new government yet to build a track record against which it can be judged, foreign investors remain wary.

of foreign capital to dent significantly the ranks of jobs.

Officials rule out quick fix solutions. Reserve (central) Bank Governor Chris Stals said recently that the economy, now freed from anti-apartheid sanctions, needed painful reforms to promote growth and prosperity.

"We have an overprotected domestic economy that must now face some painful corrections," he said, adding that certain industries were not ready to take on the highly competitive players of industrialised and newly developed countries.

Meantime the government, led by President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), faces a stern test in managing expectations among the five-to-one black majority for rapidly enhanced living standards, analysts said.

They said 1995 would be an important year in setting a direction for the economy, and would provide the first true indication of the new government's economic management in the face of such pressure.

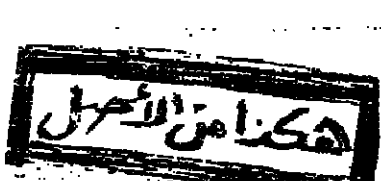
In its favour, there is evidence that local fixed investment has shown signs of significant revival, and the recovery of industrialised economies and the jump in world commodity prices could benefit South Africa's mineral and manufacturing exports.

After good, early summer rains, however, a severe mid-season drought threatens the important agriculture sector.

One of the hottest topics of debate centres on the prospect of scrapping exchange controls, which are blamed by critics for inhibiting foreign investment.

Mr. Stals, concerned about sparse foreign exchange reserves that cover the cost of barely six weeks' imports, favours a gradual reduction rather than a big bang full scale removal. Many commentators call for a

Analysts believe he could start the ball rolling in 1995. But he is expected to move cautiously, having pointed to Russia's currency turmoil to illustrate the risks of a premature liberalisation.



Iraq's innocents suffer the loss of childhood

During the Gulf conflict, most children in Baghdad thought they would not live to grow up. Sanctions are making it hard to forget the trauma of war.

— Felicity Arbuthnot reports

AS CHRISTMAS and new year are celebrated, in Iraq, children there no longer await such highlights in the calendar. Surviving under what is arguably the most draconian embargo in modern times, they cannot expect to celebrate birthday parties either; food is minimal and there is no money for gifts.

When Professor Magne Raundalen, the world-renowned child psychologist and veteran observer of children's terrors in almost every war zone in the world, travelled to Iraq with the International Harvard Study Team to report on the mental health of the children to UNICEF after the Gulf war, he said he found "the most traumatised child population" he had ever encountered.

Prof. Raundalen's studies show what he describes as a unique phenomenon: trauma which could usually be expected to lessen with time is intensifying because of the climate of hunger and deprivation. Iraqi children have given up playing games, because the games remind them of dead playmates. Studies have shown that around 80 per cent of children lost friends or siblings in the conflict.

These children are more traumatised than those who have witnessed the murder of a parent, or those who survived the ferry Herald of Free Enterprise disaster, said Prof. Raundalen, who is the director of the Centre for Crisis Psychology in Bergen in Norway.

At the time of the Gulf war, in the middle-class residential area of the Al Ameriyah shelter, 84 per cent of children thought they would lose their family. Almost the same percentage thought they would not grow up.

According to Prof. Raundalen, these children are "trapped within their trauma". They are unable to confide in their parents because they know that when it came to protecting them from bombs and mis-



Iraqi children watch a civilian building in southern Iraq hit by an allied air raid (AFP photo)

siles, adults were as helpless as children.

Rayad, aged 10, said he was tried to lay his own ghosts to rest.

"If I see anything burning, immediately I remember the shelter. I went to see the shelter and I turned my face and I wanted to walk away, and I wasn't looking and a car bumped me, and I fell on my face," he said.

Recently I walked the few yards from the horror of the shelter at Al Ameriyah. Those on the top level were burned alive, those on the bottom, boiled when the vast water tanks burst.

It was mid-morning break and children's voices rang out: the sound of small running feet reverberated and there were colourful murals of flowers, children and animals on the painted

outer walls of the building. Had one not known about the bombing, it appeared very normal.

Inside, the headteacher related how 12-year-old Naim lost 11 members of his family and extended family in the shelter. Only he and his mother remained. Another child had lost his brother; a teacher had lost her mother, two sisters and two brothers. Samira, another teacher, smiled out from the school register. She died in the shelter with four of her children.

"It is very difficult, we all have this injury inside us. But we have to be strong for the children," the head said.

"They are not right, they are lethargic, without energy, they don't play games.

We try to distract them, but we lack books, writing paper, pens, pencils. Since the embargo we have had to make do as best we can."

Among the items vetoed by the U.N. sanctions committee, are consignments of ping-pong balls, tennis balls, children's bicycles and clothes, pencils and sharpeners, erasers and school notebooks.

The school at Al Ameriyah is working closely with a trauma centre, the first of its kind in Iraq, which has been set up by Prof. Raundalen and his colleagues. I met some of the children and heard their stories from Saana Jezrawi, the psychologist in charge.

Ali is nearly seven. His father was a soldier who was killed in the Gulf war. Unlike many, his body was

recovered and brought home to be buried. Ali was present at the funeral and the graveyard is near his home. Every day for two years Ali ran to the grave and tried to dig it up, saying "it's all right, daddy, you can come out now, the men who put you here have gone away."

Another is Luay, whom Prof. Raundalen met on his first post-war visit to Baghdad. During the war, Luay joined a local group that rescued people from bombed houses. A small child, he could crawl into spaces inaccessible to adults. He told Prof. Raundalen how he wriggled into one building to find "the body of a mother."

Further on, he found the body of her baby. He crawled back through the debris and placed the baby

on the mother's breast and wrapped her still-warm arms around it. The 10-year-old said: "The world is out of order."

But his worst memory was of finding a head. In the same house, he lifted up a jacket to find a head underneath. Luay had carefully wrapped the head and brought it out for identification. He says he dreams every night that he is bringing the head out of a pocket to be identified.

In July 1993, the U.N. food and Agricultural Commission noted "with deep concern, the prevalence of several commonly recognised pre-famine indicators" in Iraq. Rations of basics such as tea, sugar, rice and oil provide only one third of the calorific intake the World Health

Organisation estimates is the lowest for nutritional requirements.

Sabah's mother decided she would give her family a treat. She used the month's sugar rations and some hoarded condiments to bake her husband a surprise birthday cake. Arriving home, he was furious that their supplies had been squandered on such a luxury. His wife walked into the street, doused herself with the only cheap commodity in Iraq — unsaleable petrol — and set herself alight.

When she was four, Nihal went to Colorado with her parents who were post graduate students. Amid the atmosphere of paranoia that surrounded the run-up to the Gulf war, the family was expelled. Two days be-

fore the war began, they had settled into their new home in Baghdad — and a new baby brother was just a week old. Nihal believed that the war could not happen. She had grown up in the United States. When the bombing started and glass fell into the baby's cot, Nihal's father tore the feather pillows and duvets from the beds and piled them up in a bathroom without windows. The family sheltered there, using pillows and duvets as protection from Cruise missiles.

Ali, Luay, Sabah and Nihal and others at the centre are the lucky ones. They are receiving help and support. All Iraq's children — a third of the population is under 15 — need counselling so that normality and childhood can be restored.

Rwanda recovery faces host of obstacles

By Julian Bedford
Reuters

KIGALI — The dead from Rwanda's genocide have become skeletons while the living struggle with a host of obstacles to rebuilding their country.

"The massacres have gone so deep, it will be difficult to find forgiveness," says U.N. special representative Shaharyar Khan. "If I was a perpetrator I don't think I could ever forgive myself."

"Until there is justice, victims will find it hard to forgive," he told Reuters five months after the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) ended the genocide of up to one million people.

Since last July, Rwanda has had a new government, but progress on helping it recover from the worst genocide in Africa this century has been agonisingly slow despite international aid.

Few of the more than one million Hutu refugees who fled to Tanzania, Zaire and Burundi have gone home. They are victims of intimidation by the former Hutu administration behind the genocide and fear revenge attacks by the RPF or their return.

Some of those Hutus who did return, braving the threats of the Hutu government in exile in the refugee camps abroad, were victims of reprisal attacks by the RPF or Hutu extremists. Aid has poured in from

more than 100 agencies, but there has been little direct aid to the new government for a foreign donors suspicious of the administration in the capital Kigali.

In shell-pocked ministries with little more than desks and chairs, unpaid civil servants try to implement policies without a budget as their problems increase daily with an influx of Tutsis who fled their country during massacres in the 1990s.

Tutsi minorities have moved to houses, farms and businesses of the Hutus still languishing in camps abroad and have switched the international language of Kigali from French to English.

Many of those who witnessed but survived last year's slaughter from April to May remain traumatised.

Hutu faces greet visitors to a Kigali orphanage as children still cannot confront the horror that their elders unleashed.

One of the men entrusted by the RPF with rebuilding the country, Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu, says: "We have three major problems — refugees, security and land — and the three are interlinked."

There is no way one can live in a country without security and the continued presence of over one million of our people outside our borders is a threat to our security.

For them to come

home, these people must feel included in our country. To achieve that, this government must show no hypocrisy, especially over land. We must not exact justice over land tenure.

"If there is to be justice for those who suffered during the massacres — and remember Hutus as well as Tutsis were killed — there must be justice over land, houses and businesses."

Government insistence that properties be returned to their original owners has often been ignored by local authorities, who favour newcomers over returnees tainted by the genocide.

The chain of command from head of state to town mayor is weak in a country where communication was knocked back to the Stone Age by retreating troops or militiamen, who looted or destroyed everything to ensure that the RPF inherited nothing.

Until international funds arrive and the government buys the loyalty of its army and civil servants, its authority is weak.

Mr. Khan says financing will start to arrive early in 1995 from the World Bank and European Union (EU) and hopes this will get the state moving, but adds only a basic minimum has been promised.

"It is like a shipwreck. The passengers have been saved from the sea with humanitarian aid. Now the funds are coming to rebuild

the ship. But the ship will need new equipment and that means a lot more money."

"Even a government of angels cannot deliver without money," the U.N. envoy adds. "We must trust them and see how they go."

Mr. Khan says he hopes the government proves trustworthy and delivers on human rights pledges because the future of Rwanda is bleak while the refugees remain in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi.

Before refugees start returning in meaningful numbers, Mr. Khan says the intimidation campaign must end and the government must make a greater effort to be more welcoming to new arrivals.

Mr. Khan is hopeful that money will allow the government to present a more welcoming face and pay the army repair the damaged infrastructure and restart the wrecked judicial system.

"If you include land settlement and proprietary rights, then justice is the single most important issue facing the government," Mr. Khan said.

"In 1995 I hope we see two things: the beginnings of the international tribunal and the resurrection of the national stream of justice. These processes must be seen to have started by Rwandans and the refugees for the wounds to start to heal."

The point of contention — the Golan Heights

By Mariam M. Shahin
Special to the Jordan Times

QUNEITRA — The liberated capital of the Golan province — Syria's 14th, lies a five-minute drive away from the famous shouting hill, where every Friday, Syrians from the Golan gather to look across a green valley and literally "shout" to their relatives in the Israeli occupied zones and share the news of their daily lives.

Battery driven loudspeakers and picnic baskets have been part of the lives of Golan's inhabitants since the 1967 war. Families have been separated for the last 27 years. One such family is that of Ismael Abu Hamad, who heads for the shouting hill every Friday. A native of Majdal Shams, one of five Golan villages under Israeli occupation, Mr. Abu Hamad comes to speak to his family over the loudspeaker. This Friday he has brought his fiancée, Reema, to introduce her via-loudspeaker to his parents, Mr. Abu Hamad, 23, is one of only eight young men from the Golan who were allowed to study in Syria some five years ago. He is studying to become a dentist at the University of Damascus and return to Majdal Shams.

Mr. Abu Hamad says that he and the 20,000 Druze living under Israeli occupation in the Golan are "prisoners inside the Golan."

"We have a special Golan identification card, we are not Israeli nationals and thus cannot move around freely outside the

confines of the Golan," he says. "We have no rights and any well we want to drill, any room we want to build, we need permission from the Israeli occupation authorities; we live under their mercy."

Mr. Abu Hamad says that as an Arab from the occupied Golan, he and "all others" want the Golan to be returned to Syria — "because we are part of Syria — not part of Israel."

Mr. Abu Hamad and his fiancée return from the shouting hill to Quneitra, where 60,000 people now live in that liberated part of the Golan — the new city of Quneitra. Adjacent to the older and largely destroyed city that was captured by the Israelis in 1967 and liberated by the Syrian army in 1973, the old Quneitra has been preserved in almost the same way as the withdrawing Israeli army left it — destroyed.

The town hospital, which once served a population of 53,000, was used as a target practice by the Israelis during the six-year occupation of the city.

Every house, store, mosque and church was numbered in pale blue English numbers during the occupation. After liberation the Syrians found that most of the town's houses and buildings had been blown up by the retreating army. The Syrians painted references to the buildings' former usage — "the barber," "the dentist" and "the restaurant."

The Syrian government sees the destruction of old Quneitra along with the

destruction of some 142 Arab villages in the occupied Golan by the Israelis as a weary sign of Israeli intentions. "Such a destructive spirit is void of intentions of peaceful existence in this part of the world," says the government appointed guide to the Golan.

During the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, most of the Golan was occupied by the Israelis. U.N. Resolution 242 specifically requires Israel to withdraw from lands occupied in war.

The Golan Heights are a series of mountainous areas some 1,860 square kilometres in size. Of these Israel still occupies less than 1,250 square kilometres, having forcibly made a partial withdrawal in 1973.

The Golan Heights are Syria's 14th province, home to minority groups such as the Druze, some Christians as well as Circassian Sunnis. In all, Israeli occupation of the Heights displaced some 150,000 indigenous people in 1967. Today they and their descendants number 400,000.

The Syrians that remained on the Golan were mostly Druze mountain villagers. The villages in question are five — they are Majdal Shams, Ain Kinia, Masada, Rajar and Buqata. Some 20,000 live in these five occupied villages of the Golan.

Since 1967, Israel has built 40 settlements in the Golan and some 16,000, mostly economic, rather than religious, settlers, have made the rich Syrian mountain range their home. Israelis say that

"Israel's best wine comes from the Golan."

One fifth of the Golan consists of forests and according to Syrian government officials, the Golan is dubbed "the Kuwait of Syria" for its economic potential which include 172 fresh springs.

"They, the Israelis, will never be able to keep it," explains Syrian political analyst, and sometime confidant of the country's decision makers Mohammad Aziz Shukri, Dean of the Law School at the University of Damascus.

Mr. Shukri dismisses Israel security claims which argue the Golan is a necessary "security valve" to safeguard Israeli borders. "Our capital is only 35 miles away from the Israeli missiles — security is a state of mind — if anyone is in danger, it is us."

Serving as a central trade route between Asia, India and Europe, Syria has always played a central political as well as economic role in the Middle East since long before the Crusades.

Syrian politicians dismiss talk of "Syria being left out" if a peace with Israel is not concluded soon. "My civilisation goes back to 3,000 B.C.," says Mr. Shukri. "We cannot be left out of any peace deal, we will leave others out," Mr. Shukri says.

Father Fayed Freijar — a country priest from the southern Syrian province of the Houran, echoes his compatriot: "We are the oldest Arabs — we were here even before the beginning of time."

New Saudi fees could raise \$4b

not set a date for when it would start functioning. Even before it was set up, the authority would monitor reserve and liquidity ratios of banks in Palestinian areas to ensure they conformed to bank for international settlements standards. It would also watch interest and exchange rates.

Mr. Biseiso said his draft programme was worked out in close cooperation with the IMF but he could not confirm rumours among bankers in Gaza that the fund was thinking of setting up an office in the self-rule areas.

His preliminary estimate was that it was based on weighted average price for Saudi crude of \$15 a barrel instead of \$14.50 last year. In either case, it is less than the current weighted average for Saudi crude exports of about \$15.20 a barrel, so just maintaining current prices would give an unbudgeted boost.

Even if last year's deficit is not eliminated, it is due to be reduced through the new fees, which will also dis-

**Iraqi dinar
tumbles,
prices soar**

private-sector dealings and most government financial operations.

Prime Minister Mahmoud Zuh'bi told parliament in November his government planned to continue efforts to unify exchange rates "gradually and in a studied way." He gave no timetable.

The Syrian pound on the black market has been stable at 48-50 pounds to a dollar for more than five years. Economic sources said this was a good indicator for the government in adopting a unified rate.

BAGHDAD (R)—The Iraqi dinar nosedived against the U.S. dollar Tuesday, leading to further hikes in prices of essential commodities.

The dollar was trading at 665 dinars on the illegal blackmarket, where it fetched 540 two weeks ago. Authorized dealers, working under central bank rules, still

March 20, about the same as last year.

In October the central bank cracked down on illegal money changing, arresting dozens of dealers, and limited exchange houses mainly to selling \$1,000 to each passenger travelling abroad at a controlled rate of around 2,700 riyals per dollar.

This has led to a gap of about 10 per cent between the rates in the open market

December rate was 37,543 lira.

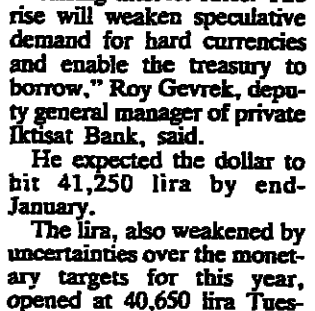
The over-valuation of the lira has galvanised expectations for faster lira depreciation in early 1995.

The central bank has raised money rates to curb the slide of the lira which gained momentum in the past week, but some bankers warn of adverse effects of high rates on the economy, likely to contract by over four per cent in 1994.

"The central bank should allow faster depreciation within certain limits instead of raising interest rates. The rise will weaken speculative demand for hard currencies and enable the treasury to borrow," Roy Gevrek, deputy general manager of private Iktisat Bank, said.

He expected the dollar to hit 41,250 lira by end-January.

The lira, also weakened by uncertainty over the monetary targets for this year, opened at 40,650 lira Tues-



MUTT, YOU GOT OUT OF THE HOUSE WITHOUT THE SWEET WOMAN KNOWING IT!

SHUSH! YEH!

BUT HOW DID YOU DO IT?

I WENT UP TO THE ATTIC, GOT OUT ON THE ROOF AND CAME DOWN THE WATER DRAIN PIPE!

GOSH, I KNOW YOU GOT THINNER BUT ---

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Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ARRIB

QATAR

ENGLIT

GRAFEO

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: MAIZE GLORY TOUCHY WALRUS
 Answer: What the octopus wore to the formal party —
 A COAT OF ARMS

(Answers tomorrow)

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1995
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The triple Moon square to Venus, Mercury and Jupiter, combined with the opposition of Mars makes this a day and evening when individuals share an inability to express emotions and affections towards one another.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Morning is the best time to handle monetary affairs. Get caught up on routine activities. The evening can prove profitable for you now.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get personal affairs handled well in the morning. Know what your goals are, then go towards gaining them with profitable activities.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Morning is the best time to get practical matters improved. Be social with all your friends in the evening. Increase your popularity.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get busy at whatever you have promised others in the morning. Be with your most devoted admirer in the evening.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Handle those civic affairs you have accepted in the morning. Be loyal to a bigwig in the morning and you will get a lot of appreciation.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Try to please one who has power over you, whether in business or personal life in the evening and you will be very successful.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Attend to business affairs well in the morning. Later, you can enter into new activities which are more interesting and profitable.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be sure to keep promises to a partner, even if it takes time. After a busy day, enjoy the company of your mate or loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get busy at tasks in the morning. Later, you can accomplish much in the outside world. Attend a nice party in the evening.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get busy perfecting a special gift in the morning. Relax and rest up in the evening for a very busy day tomorrow.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get busy improving home conditions in the morning. Later, be with good friends at the entertainment of your choice.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can communicate very well in the morning, but later the focus should be on home or loved ones. Show appreciation for your friends.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

ACROSS

- 1 Cornucopia
- 6 Whisked
- 10 Slaughterer's daughter
- 14 Feel dizzy
- 15 Rachel stops
- 16 Change part
- 17 Man, for one
- 18 Gaudy's sister
- 20 Expresses account book
- 22 Joices
- 23 Ranges across
- 24 Soft soil
- 25 Audible
- 26 Murmur
- 30 Black-head oven
- 32 Can guess
- 33 Droop to
- 34 "The greatest"
- 37 — day
- 38 Fear Oya's snout
- 39 Cold vessel
- 41 Post — Aligned
- 43 Chain
- 44 No reason
- 46 Jack-to-breast-pulpit
- 47 Will process
- 48 Faintly
- 53 Vatican
- 56 English fur
- 57 American emperor
- 60 Danish
- 61 Sewaled and
- 62 Drove
- 63 Nourish
- 65 Libers
- 66 Philosophic
- 68 On the loose

DOWN

- 1 Grossly timely
- 2 Odin, Thor, et al.
- 3 Child of acote
- 4 Kind of housekeeper
- 5 Thelous
- 6 British man
- 7 Bashed
- 8 Corolla or suffer
- 9 Pasty activity
- 10 Smiled
- 11 Hairless man; for fern
- 12 "Don't breast"
- 13 Celer
- 14 Post or dog
- 15 — follower
- 16 Lower to die
- 17 Psychologist
- 18 Ailment
- 19 Drove
- 20 Naturalness
- 21 Map rebellious
- 22 Philosopher
- 23 astronomical
- 24 Hostess of guests
- 25 Part of NAFTA
- 26 Changed particle
- 27 Assault
- 28 Crushed
- 29 Kind of sand
- 30 Is transformed, is a way
- 31 Yarn unit
- 32 Corolla or lightning
- 33 de Leon
- 34 Lighter
- 35 Get away
- 36 Carrots turn
- 37 Sings syllable
- 38 Incares battery
- 39 Essayist Lamb
- 40 Dry
- 41 Strong syllable
- 42 Incares battery

Jordan phosphate exports rise 7%

AMMAN (R) — Jordan's Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), a major world producer, saw rock phosphate exports rise seven per cent in 1994 to 3,824,900 tonnes, its managing director said Tuesday.

"More marketing efforts were made in 1994 to rehabilitate our position in our traditional markets, which also saw an increase in exports to Australia, a growing potential market," Sameh Madani told Reuters.

Exports in 1993 were 3,564,960 tonnes. The Kingdom, world's second largest exporter, has a seven million tonnes production capacity but consumes about one million tonnes for fertiliser production.

Exports were partly boosted by buoyant demand from India, Jordan's main market, with sales rising to 1,008,000 tonnes in 1994 from 835,000 tonnes in 1993. Australia's falling phosphate reserves have prompted it to seek new suppliers and JPMC concluded a 300,000-tonne deal in 1994.

Jordan's exports of ammonium phosphate rose 46.5 per cent in 1994 to 700,620 tonnes from 477,817 tonnes in 1993, Mr. Madani

added. A \$32 million revamping of the company's major Agaba fertiliser complex, boosting capacity to 750,000 tonnes of ammonium phosphate from 600,000 tonnes, was partly responsible.

Jordan also exported 10,050 tonnes of aluminium fluoride in 1994 against 10,303 tonnes last year, Mr. Madani added.

Over one million tonnes of phosphate rock was processed as fertiliser last year in the company's main Agaba plant.

The Kingdom has seen production of raw phosphates drop to 4.1 million tonnes in 1994 from 4.3 million tonnes in 1993 due to lower demand, officials said.

JPMC officials said the company drew on a large stockpile of phosphate rock accumulated after the collapse of traditional markets in eastern Europe, reducing operating costs.

Higher phosphate prices with increased world demand and the drawing on reserves are expected to reverse JPMC's 20 million dinar (\$2.8 million) loss in 1993. JPMC had a two million dinar (\$2.8 million) half year net profit, officials said.

Jewellery business booms in Russia

MOSCOW (AFP) — As an investment or as presents, gemstones are catching the eye of the rich and the less well off in Russia, and jewellery shops are all over Moscow.

"Sapphires and emeralds are selling like hot cakes," said a delighted Galya Kamunnikova, who runs one of the new jewellery outlets in the Gum department store on Red Square.

She has rings, bracelets and other Western-made ornaments on offer from \$200 to \$10,000 a piece.

It used to be only very rich Russians who patronised the city's luxurious jewel shops, where the doors were always kept closed as a precaution, but now the trade has become more democratic.

"Small rings at \$300 are selling very well," Ms. Kamunnikova said. "I moved from a fur-clad woman to a man in an overcoat who simply wanted 'something' for about one million rubles (\$285).

Business is good and it shows in the shop's modern Western style by a French architect who also designed the fittings and had them made in Italy.

"On average, customers spend \$600 to \$700, some as an investment, some to buy presents," she said.

Such profitable trade is also extremely risky because of the attentions of organised crime, jewellers know. Generally speaking, the "official" owner who gives you a business card is not the real proprietor.

The latter often has several shops, but is never there for official receptions and his or her name appears on no document.

A truck factory in the Urals, short of cash, pays its workers their monthly wages in gold rings, necklaces or earrings. It used to be a leading manufacturer of trucks and spare parts for the army's tanks, but became unable to pay proper wages for six months.

"We had to do something, we couldn't pay them in lorries," said a member of management.

TCC plans to float \$50 million in Eurobonds

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) is negotiating with potential managers the floatation of bonds worth \$50 million in the first such Jordanian venture into the European capital market since 1988.

The proposed issue is widely seen as a litmus test for Jordan's hopes to attract foreign capital to local investments in the wake of the emerging new opportunities after the Kingdom and Israel signed a historic peace treaty in October.

The peace treaty, which ended a 46-year state of war, is also seen as having largely eliminated the state of instability and uncertainty that prompted many international investors from channelling capital to the Kingdom.

Afram Jamil, deputy general manager of the state-owned TCC, said a final decision on granting the mandate for managing the issue was expected soon.

Mr. Jamil dismissed reports that the TCC had already concluded a deal with ANZ Grindlays to manage the issue. "We are continuing the negotiations with the (potential) managers of the issue and a final decision is expected soon," he told the Jordan Times.

Nine banks were reported to have submitted bids for managing the issue and five of them are shortlisted. According to banking sources, ANZ Grindlays is one of the main contenders among the shortlisted five.

The Amman regional office of ANZ Grindlays referred all queries to the bank's London offices, which bank officials said was directly in charge of the affair.

The World Bank will guarantee the principal and the TCC, through the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), will guarantee the yield on the bonds.

Final terms of the floatation are also under discussion. However, the yield on the bonds has to be better than those offered by other fund-raisers in the market for them to be attractive to investors, analysts noted.

However, the World Bank guarantee for the bonds is expected to reduce the rate of yield since such an undertaking by the world body automatically reduces the risk for investors.

The proceeds of the issue of the seven-year bonds will be used to finance TCC expansion projects expected to be implemented in three years starting early 1995, Mr. Jamil said. The projects are estimated to cost around \$200 million.

The European Investment Bank (EIB), an arm of the European Union, is granting \$50 million as a loan to finance the projects, the EIB bank of Japan \$23 million and the World Bank is providing \$20 million. The rest of the needed funds would be provided by the TCC itself.

"The projects involve basic services and expansion both vertically and horizontally," Mr. Jamil said.

The TCC, which holds a monopoly for basic phone services in the Kingdom, is expected to launch moves towards gradual privatisation in mid-1995. The scope of privatisation and how far the government is willing to let go of one of the major income-earners of the Treasury remain unclear.

The TCC made an operational profit of around JD 100 million in 1993 and is expected to have raised it by about 20 per cent in 1994.

Economic analysts noted that the very fact that nine banks were interested in managing the TCC bond issue reflected the emerging international interest in Jordan and expectations that the offer would meet excellent response in the European capital market.

While interest in internationally-guaranteed bonds cannot be seen as reflecting interest in direct investments, bankers say that the TCC bond issue should serve as opening the door for Jordan to sound out the international capital market at a time when the global race for capital is fierce.

Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Jan 3/1995	Hong Kong Jan 3/1995
Sterling Pound	1.5665	1.5615**
Deutsche Mark	1.5495	1.5558**
Swiss Franc	1.3090	1.3138**
French Franc	5.3370	5.3425**
Japanese Yen	99.75	100.11
European Currency Unit	1.2273	1.2208**

* 100 Per Cent
** European Opening @ 8.00 a.m. GMT

Intercontinental Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.75	6.18	6.75	7.50
Sterling Pound	5.87	6.37	6.93	7.75
Deutsche Mark	4.87	4.93	5.18	5.62
Swiss Franc	3.75	4.06	4.23	4.56
French Franc	5.88	6.06	6.50	6.93
Japanese Yen	2.12	2.16	2.25	2.45
European Currency Unit	6.00	6.37	6.75	7.18

Interbank bid rates for overnight trading U.S. Dollars, 1000 per cent.

Forward Rates

Date: 3/1/1995

Gold

322.70 322.70 322.70 322.70

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 3/1/1995

Currency

U.S. Dollar

Sterling Pound

Deutsche Mark

Swiss Franc

French Franc

Japanese Yen

Dutch Guilder

Swedish Krona

Italian Lira

Belgian Franc

Order Conversion

Currency

Rabat/Dinar

Lebanese Lira

Saudi Riyal

Kuwaiti Dinar

Qatari Riyal

Egyptian Pound

Omani Riyal

UAE Dirham

Creek Drachma

Cypriot Pound

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3972/82	Canadian dollar
	1.5590/00	Deutsche marks
	1.7446/56	Dutch guilders
	1.3170/80	Swiss francs
	32.02/06	Belgian francs
	5.3715/65	French francs
	1622.8/3.8	Italian lire
	100.22/32	Japanese yen
	7.4525/25	Swedish crowns
	6.7950/00	Norwegian crowns
	6.1155/05	Danish crowns
	\$1.5607/17	
One sterling	\$381.30/381.70	

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AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/01/1995			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PRV. CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	20	3645	181.500 182.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3667	15228	4.110 4.150
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	18794	73377	3.840 3.850
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	3280	5575	1.590 1.650
JORDAN KIWAT BANK	1592	4757	2.980 2.990
JORDAN GULF BANK	7050	11329	1.590 1.600
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	2225	8289	3.710 3.730
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	1200	5500	5.000 5.000
BUSINESS BANK	250	908	3.630 3.630
REIT KUALA SAVING INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	450	1419	3.130 3.180
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4080	6089	1.480 1.510
PELLELA INVESTMENT BANK	2685	4562	1.680 1.690
BANKS SECTOR	45233	140656	INDEX NUMBER: 137.58
			CHANGE: +0.472
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	1650	4076	2.480 2.470
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	250	635	2.540 2.540
ARAB UNION INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE	250	795	3.350 3.180
INSURANCE SECTOR	2150	5506	INDEX NUMBER: 138.15
			CHANGE: -0.052
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	8270	12833	1.540 1.560
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	11400	17291	1.500 1.520
JORDAN RIMEX MINERAL	200	530	2.520 2.650
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	250	1213	4.950 4.850
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	450	1089	2.420 2.420
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1150	1579	1.350 1.370
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	2750	3368	1.170 1.230
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALKAH	838	10705	12.650 12.800
REIT KUALA SAVING INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	3522	23260	2.410 2.440
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	2500	8625	3.450 3.450
SERVICES SECTOR	37430	80802	INDEX NUMBER: 132.19
			CHANGE: +0.237
ATTAKHESH CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2250	3072	1.340 1.370
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	13937	40582	2.910 2.910
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	100	296	2.970 2.960
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	250	1363	5.350 5.850
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1453	13892	9.380 9.600
JORDAN TANNING	1574	540	7.200 7.200
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1574	6884	4.400 4.350
THE JORDAN ROASTED MILLS	2400	18530	7.700 7.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	2800	14875	5.200 5.250
SPINNING & WEAVING	950	2505	2.700 2.680
RAJIA INDUSTRIES	3750	10557	2.790 2.830
ARAB DATA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3750	37592	16.200 16.550
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	4550	4614	1.000 1.030
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	173	1214	6.900 7.050
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	34000	32260	.940 .950
ARAB FOOD PROCESSING & TRADING	25150	36559	1.440 1.460
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	2200	6178	2.800 2.850
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	100	512	5.390 5.120
JORDAN ROCKWOL INDUSTRIES	150	233	1.520 1.550
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MACH/INCO	3500	2990	.840 .850
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	1383	7393	5.250 5.320
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	650	1318	1.960 2.020
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	2140	5932	2.770 2.780
KARTER INVESTMENT	500	900	1.800 1.800
UNIVERSAL MOBILE INDUSTRIES	3750	3759	2.120 2.120
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	250	608	2.560 2.430
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	107460	255182	INDEX NUMBER: 129.14
			CHANGE: +0.672
GRAND TOTAL	192273	482146	INDEX NUMBER: 143.95
			CHANGE: +0.512
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	289564		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	333199		

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Becker: Sampras under threat in Open

PERTH (R) — Boris Becker predicted Tuesday that Pete Sampras' position as world number one would come under serious threat in 1995 starting at this month's Australian Open.

The three-times Wimbledon champion has flown into Australia early to represent Germany at the Hopman Cup team tournament, clearly still buoyed by his return to form in the second half of last year.

American Sampras has held the top spot virtually uninterrupted since April 1993, but Becker believes he and Andre Agassi are well-placed to challenge for the title if they start the year well.

"In the second half of the year he got injured and couldn't really play, while Andre and myself picked up our game. It was more exciting for everyone," said the world number three.

"The key is to play consistent and good tennis over 12 months. Andre and myself played good for six to seven months, but in order to challenge people we have to do what we did in the second half of 1994 for the whole year."

Becker missed last year's Australian Open because of the birth of his son Noah, but has now arrived in better condition for the Melbourne fortnight than at any time since his only title there in 1991.

"I wasn't in the best shape in 1992 or 1993, but now even though I've taken more time off from tennis, I've been training and I'm feeling very good. Hopefully I can win a few more."

Now 27, Becker credits coach Nick Bollettieri with giving him "new inspiration" and has called a temporary ceasefire with Australian Open organisers over the proposal to cut the time between points from 25 to 20 seconds.

At the Sydney Indoor in October, Becker claimed the change would put the players' health at risk in high temperatures and even threatened to withdraw in protest.

Compromise has since been reached, and Becker also played a dead bat to inquiries about his future Davis Cup intentions, cur-

rently the subject of fevered speculation in Germany.

"Everyone has been talking except me," he said. "There is no further news."

A decision has also been delayed on Goran Ivanisevic's fitness for the Australian Open.

The Croat has made good progress since injuring his right knee in an exhibition match on New Year's Day but is still going for precautionary X-rays Wednesday.

Courier wants no burnout repeat

Former world number one Jim Courier said Tuesday he was determined to avoid the burn-out which disrupted his career last year.

The American world number 13 started his preparations for this month's Australian Open with a 7-6, 6-1 victory over experienced Swiss qualifier Jakob Hlasek in the first round of the Australian men's hardcourt championships.

Courier briefly quite the Tour last August after a shock second round defeat by Spain's Alex Corretja in Indianapolis, but returned later in the month to play in the U.S. Open.

He said at the time, he needed the break to renew his enthusiasm for the game and hoped he would learn from the experience.

"I experienced a bit of burn-out during the last (northern hemisphere) summer and I always want to be happy to play. I want to keep that feeling going all year," Courier said.

The former Australian Open champion said Hlasek had provided stern opposition in his warm-up for this year's opening grand slam event at Flinders Park, starting on January 16.

"It was a tough first round draw here, particularly to play a qualifier who is as experienced as Hlasek," Courier said.

"It was a tough match for me because he had three matches under the belt to get used to the balls and the conditions."

Hingis aware of burnout risk

Swiss teenage prodigy Martina



Boris Becker

Hingis Tuesday said a common-sense approach would prevent her repeating Jennifer Capriati's experience as a tennis burn-out.

"If you show common sense in how many tournaments you play, you should be all right," the 14-year-old told reporters. "It would be silly to play 35 events in 35 weeks."

"I'm not going to do that so there is no danger of burn-out," she added.

Speaking on her arrival in Sydney for the qualifying rounds for next week's New South Wales Open, Hingis

said her light schedule to date marked an early difference to the American's ill-fated career.

"I think it is a little different for me because I haven't played in a lot of tournaments," Hingis told reporters through an interpreter.

Hingis, accompanied by her mother, Melanie, who doubles as her mentor and training partner, is ranked 87 in the world after playing a handful of adult events.

She turned professional last September, only days after her 14th birthday. If Hingis qualifies this

weekend, she will join Capriati, now on the comeback trail at the age of 18, in the main draw at White City.

Capriati exploded into professional ranks in 1990, aged 13, after enjoying considerable success, her form slumped in 1993, prompting her to quit the tour for 13 months.

Hingis, the former junior Wimbledon and junior French Open champion, is convinced that careful management of her schedule will help her avoid problems others have faced.

Marseille in trouble... again

PARIS (AFP) — Olympique Marseille have once more hit the self-destruct button, and this time the threat of extinction for France's most famous football club looks more real than ever.

More famous these days for fancy accounting than fancy football, the club were forced to drop into the second division because of financial irregularities at the end of last season.

History could repeat itself — with dire consequences for the club — at the end of this season.

Last month the club and its president, Bernard Tapie, parted company and Pierre Cangioni, the new president, was promptly summoned to the league headquarters here.

He was given until next month to come up with a rescue package for the club by league president Noel Le Graet, who said he wants to avoid a winding up order at all costs.

"At the end of January we will have another meeting," he said. "And in February Pierre Cangioni will give us his rescue plan."

Under Tapie, the former Socialist government minister, the club's opaque accounting frustrated the league's financial watchdogs.

Le Graet was appointed in 1991 to clean up French football and balance the league's books.

"There are 41 (professional) clubs in France out of 42

which give us accounts which meet with our criteria. For example they don't include the national value of their playing staff in the figures," said Le Graet. "There is one club, Marseille, which does not meet these criteria."

He added: "I am not going to give you figures, but I can tell you the differences between our version of Olympique Marseille's finances and Pierre Cangioni's version are significant."

Le Graet promised that by 1995 debt-ridden French football would be in the black.

At the league's annual meeting at the end of January he is expected to announce that the 20 first division clubs have slashed their collective deficit by 500 million francs in four years to 120 million by the end of last season. Half the deficit was owed by Marseille alone.

Before his departure last month, under pressure following the collapse of his own business empire, Tapie painted a rosy picture of Marseille's financial health.

But Le Graet says the club is in "dire straits."

Unless they balance their books, they face another and this time potentially fatal enforced relegation at the end of the season.

"For now we can meet our running costs," said Cangioni. "So we have a breathing space before the next meeting with Le Graet."

But unless Cangioni comes

up with the rescue package, the players, fighting for promotion back to the first division — which they should achieve — could then find themselves automatically relegated back to the second.

The recent musical chairs of coaches has not helped. Marc Bourrier and his successor Gerard Gili were sacked within days of each other before Christmas and former youth team coach Henry Stambouli started Monday as the side's third coach in a month.

But if they fail to gain promotion, they could slide into the abyss of semi-professional soccer in the third division.

Their sojourn this season in the second division has hurt a club with a European pedigree and a budget and payroll to match.

Marseille had already suffered in the 1993-94 season when they were prevented from defending their European Cup as a result of the Valenciennes bribery scandal.

Tapie and five other defendants will appear in court in March concerning the alleged attempt to fix the match against Valenciennes six days before their May 26, 1993 European Cup triumph against AC Milan.

The European ban, which also kept the club out of the European Super Cup and the International Cup, cost the club at least 100 million francs, said Tapie.

Germany's Volker sets backstroke record

HONG KONG (R) — Sandra Volker, who almost gave up competitive swimming after a disastrous Barcelona Olympics, set a world record of 27.86 seconds in the 50 metres backstroke at a world cup short-course meeting on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old German, who set her old mark of 27.93 at the 1992 World Championships in Barcelona, set the new record in December 1993.

That record set at Sabadell, Spain, was smashed twice last year by Bai Xinyi of China but her time of 27.62 seconds was erased from the record books after she tested positive for ephedrine and was banned for a month.

"After Barcelona, when I finished 16th (eighth in the B final) I wanted to give up swimming. But my coach (Dirk Langer) asked me if I wanted to train in a different way and I accepted," said Volker.

The individually-tailored training regime paid handsome dividends on Tuesday when she smashed the old record with a tremendous swim.

"I knew that I had a chance as I was feeling good and had been training hard during the Christmas holidays," she said.

"I knew I swam a good time but I did not realise it was a record until the time went up."

Volker's colleague Franziska Van Almsick also showed explosive form, completing a win double in the 50 and 200 metres freestyle events.

The 16-year-old German star, clocked 25.11 seconds for the 50 metres and one minute 57.02 in the 200.

But the first leg of the seven-leg world cup series was derailed by the absence of the drug-tested Chinese and the powerhouse squads from the United States, Australia and Russia.

The reason given in Beijing for the withdrawal of the Chinese, seven of whose swimmers were banned after their Asian Games successes in October, was that they were too tired.

Swimmers from America, Australia and Russia were missing because of training commitments in their own countries.



One of the cars participating in this year's Paris-Dakar rally being inspected by technicians in Granada, Spain prior to the ferry trip to Morocco (AFP photo)

Paris-Dakar Rally Saby wins 1st stage

ER RACHIDIA, Morocco (AFP) — Bruno Saby won the first African stage of the 10,000 kilometres Paris-Dakar rally for Mitsubishi Monday but Citroen retain overall control after two days.

Morning fog shrouded the start and Saby, the 1993 champion, won a shortened special stage in his Pajero in 2hr 29min 24sec from two other Frenchmen, team-mate Jean-Pierre Kottensky, 25sec behind, and last year's winner, Pierre Lartigue in a Citroen.

Competitors who had arrived overnight by ferry from Spain were forced to drive into the Moroccan desert in convoy in the fog-bound morning which forced the organisers to cut 30 kilometres off the 255km special timed section.

Citroen hold to the first

three positions in the overall standings with first stage winner Timo Salonen, the former world rally champion, in the lead from Lartigue and four-times Dakar winner Ari Vatanen third.

American Danny Laporte led the motorcycles home in 2hr 45min 32sec. Laporte, who couldn't find sponsorship at home for his private Yamaha, is riding for the Russians who stumped up the cash.

He was followed in by Jordi Arcarons of Spain, half a minute adrift on his Cagiva. Heinz Kinigadner of Austria, on a KTM, was third, retaining the overall lead after his victory in the first stage.

The third stage, 576km from here to Ouazzatine, includes a 405km section on hard rocky tracks. The 14-stage rally ends in Senegal January 15.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Romario suffers cut eye

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil striker Romario suffered a cut above the eye when he was hit by a flying beer can during a New Year party in Rio. But he said on television Monday that he would be fit to play for Spanish club Barcelona after the Christmas break. Romario, who was fined earlier this year by Barcelona for returning late from a holiday in Brazil, was interviewed at Rio airport shortly before returning to Spain. He appeared with a small plaster over the cut above his right eyebrow.

Pele sworn in as sports minister

BRASILIA (R) — Former Brazilian soccer star Pele was sworn in Tuesday as his country's new sports minister. "As a minister I am surrounded by stars... and our coach has been approved by all of Brazil," he said, referring to new president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who took office on Sunday. Pele, who played in Brazil's 1958, 1962 and 1970 World Cup sides and who scored more than 1,200 goals during his playing career, said he wanted to promote sport among young people. He also wanted to create competitions involving Brazil with African countries and its neighbours in South America and said he would back campaigns to bring the 2004 Olympic games to Rio de Janeiro and the 2006 World Cup finals to Brazil.

Dreerkman shocks Ferreira

ADELAIDE (AFP) — German teenager Hendrik Dreerkman beat second seed Wayne Ferreira in the first upset of the Australian hardcourt championships Tuesday. The 19-year-old, who reached the French Open quarter-finals last year, raced to an easy 7-6 (8/6) 6-2 win over the world number 12 from South Africa, displaying an impressive array of groundstrokes and discipline. Former world number one Jim Courier overcame an early fright to beat the experienced Jakob Hlasek 7-6 (7/2) 6-1. The Swiss player was forced to qualify because he forgot lodge an entry form. "It was a tough match for me because he had three matches under his belt to get used to the balls and the conditions," said two-time Australian Open winner Courier.

Japan bid for 2002 World Cup

ZURICH (R) — Japan, South Korea and Mexico lodged bids to stage the 2002 World Cup finals before the December 31 deadline, FIFA announced Tuesday. The three countries must confirm their candidatures before February 28 after examining the world governing body's official list of requirements, FIFA added. FIFA is to decide on the venue of the first World Cup of the next millennium in June 1996 but leading officials have long suggested it should go to Asia for the first time. Mexico has already staged the finals twice — in 1970 and again in 1986 after stepping in as late replacement when Colombia decided it could not host the event.

Romario Sportsman of the Year

PARIS (R) — Brazil striker Romario was named Sportsman of the Year by French daily L'Equipe Monday. Romario, who played an influential role in Brazil's World Cup triumph last July, received 235 points in a vote by L'Equipe journalists to beat cycling's hour record holder Tony Rominger of Switzerland, second on 144 points. Swimmer Alexander Popov of Russia, the 100 metres freestyle world record holder, was third with 137 points.

Ostersund steps in for St Petersburg

GENEVA (R) — Ostersund in Sweden will take over two World Cup Nordic skiing cross country races called off in Petersburg, Russia, because of waterlogged courses, Swiss television reported Monday. The report, quoting an International Ski Federation statement, said a women's 30-km race would be staged on January 7 and a men's race over the same distance the following day.

Ivic to take over Fenerbahce

ANKARA (R) — Croatian Tamaslav Ivic is to take over as coach of Turkish first division side Fenerbahce, the club said on Monday. A Fenerbahce official said Ivic, former technical adviser at French first division side Monaco, would join the club at a training camp on Tuesday after signing a contract. Fenerbahce sacked German coach Holger Osieck in December for failing to pull the team out of a lengthy bad patch.

Brother-sister duo floors United States

PERTH (R) — The brother-sister combination of Andrei Medvedev and Natalia Medvedeva earned Ukraine a slice of tennis history Tuesday when they beat the United States 2-1 to reach the semifinals of the Hopman Cup.

The American team of Richey Reneberg and Lindsay Davenport had been seeded to face the Czech Republic in the last four, but were struggling from the moment Davenport crashed 6-0, 6-4 to Medvedev in the opening singles.

Reneberg and Medvedev produced a high-class men's singles encounter which included two tie-breaks, before the world number 15 finally ensured Ukraine's moment of glory with a 6-7, 7-6, 6-3 victory.

It was the first time any team from the former Soviet Union had reached the semifinals of the mixed team tournament, where Medvedev was keen to do well after defaulting through injury last year.

"I don't know how people will react in Ukraine, but we are both very proud," said Medvedev. "I personally think I almost played my perfect match... in the end I was lucky because he had two break points in the final set."

Reneberg could scarcely believe the outcome after producing what he felt was one of the best performances of his eight-year professional career.

But the American cause had already been badly undermined by world number six Davenport's startling defeat to Medvedeva, ranked a modest 57th on the computer.

The towering Davenport appeared leaden-footed and out of sorts as Medvedeva raced into a 6-0, 5-1 lead and a brief second set rally was never going to save her.

"I didn't expect it to be so easy," admitted Medvedeva. "But I knew I had a chance to win and I also played one of my best matches."

Medvedev gave his elder sister a good chance of beating Jana Novotna in Thursday's semifinal, even though the Czech Republic has a daunting record in the competition.

The defending champions' 2-1 victory over hosts Australia took them to the last four for the sixth time in the seven-year history of the event, yet Petr Korda had to struggle before he completed a 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 win over the fit-again Pat Cash.

"The way I served in the first set, I thought I was going to lose 6-1, 6-2," said Korda, whose ranking slipped from five to 18 during an injury-hit 1994. As it turned out, Cash was his sixth successive singles scalp at the Hopman Cup where he has been unbeaten for the past two years.

Both Korda and Novotna were playing their first competitive match for several weeks. Novotna's intended end-of-year break was spoiled by a prolonged bout of flu.

But she was not required to over-exert herself against Kristine Radford, however, winning 6-3, 6-3 in 69 minutes.

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	Raghdha & Farooq Al Fishawi in RAGHBAT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Julia Roberts/Nick Nolte in I Love Trouble Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 The Lion King Shows: 10:30, 12:30, 3:30, 5:00	CONCORD '1' Sylvester Stallone/Sharon Stone... THE SPECIALIST Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD '2' SLEEP WALKER Shows: 3:15, 5:15	will soon present: Mousa Hijazin (SUM'AA) In the satirical political comedy: Hi Citizen	Presents Abu Awwad In the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: Al Salam Ya Salam. Daily at 8:30 Saturday & Sunday is the theatre's holiday. In English Sunday January 15, 1995

Conthard move could end Mansell's career

PARIS (AFP) — David Coulthard will team up with Michael Schumacher in the 1995 world Formula 1 championship, the British team's engine suppliers said Tuesday.

The move may bring Nigel Mansell's career to an end. The 41-year-old former world champion broke off from competing in the IndyCar series in the United States to drive for Williams in four races last year.

At one point it looked as if Mansell would win the Australian Grand Prix last weekend but he was out of the race when he crashed his Williams FW18C.

But Coulthard forced Mansell into taking his option on the 23-year-old Scot by signing a contract with McLaren which the motor racing authority, FIA, effectively ruled invalid.

"He has a great future ahead of him," Williams said.

McLaren, Benetton and Ferrari have all distanced themselves from Mansell and look as if the 1992 world champion will not find other drive.

Benetton last week dismissed reports that Mansell would be driving for them this season. Team president Ross Brawn said fellow Briton Johnny Herbert

Maradona may be jailed

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Former Argentine football star Diego Maradona violated a court sentence when he took a vacation to Cuba and could be jailed when he returns, prosecutor Alejandro Caride said.

Caride said Maradona failed to notify judge Julio Campora that he planned to leave Argentina, as required by his sentence for shooting an air rifle at journalists outside his house last summer.

Maradona was sentenced to four years in prison for the shooting, but the sentence was reduced on Dec. 19 to a \$20,000 fine and a promise that he would not leave his house for more than 24 hours without notifying the judge.

This week Caride asked Campora to revoke the suspension of Maradona's prison term. If his request is accepted the judge could order that Maradona be arrested upon his return to Argentina.

Marcelo Permonen, a lawyer representing one of the journalists, said: "He did not respect his agreement with the court, for this the prosecutor requested that his exemption from prison be revoked."

Cleveland Cavaliers take slow road to success

CLEVELAND (AFP) — Call it slow, call it frustrating, call it downright dull. The Cleveland Cavaliers are happy to be riding the National Basketball Association's longest winning streak thanks to their tortoise-like offense.

"You can call it ugly or pretty or whatever you want," said guard Bobby Price. "We just go out each and every game and try to get the win."

The Cavs have done just that in their last 11 games, equalling the longest winning streak in the club's history and opening a two-game gap at the top of the Eastern Conference Central Division.

Their record of 20-8 trails only Orlando (23-6) and Phoenix (21-7) in the entire NBA, and their streak is the longest in the league this season.

They haven't done it by taking advantage of the more forgiving three-point line, or new rules designed to encourage attacking play.

Instead, coach Mike Fratello has sent the Cavaliers in almost the opposite direction, playing methodical offense backed up by a rock-solid defense to produce some of the lowest scores seen since the 24-second shot clock was introduced in 1954.

The system makes a virtue of what could otherwise be considered the Cavaliers' biggest weakness: their lack of firepower.

"We don't really have a go-to guy we can hand it to every night," said forward Tyrone Hill. "It's a team oriented game. We're a very unselfish team, and I think that's when we're at our best, when we look for each other, even if it's a slow tempo game."

That teamwork is evident in the spread of honours.

Half a dozen different players have led the Cavaliers in scoring in their last 11 games.

"The thing I like about this team more than anything is its workmanlike attitude, that we're going to leave it all out on the court," said All-Star guard Mark Price. "It doesn't matter to us who it takes to get it done."

Hill, one of the NBA's leading rebounders, is so focused on the team effort that he asked Fratello not to put him on the All-Star ballot this season.

"You kind of get caught up in that, and teammates start looking at you differently," Hill said. "I just like the way it is. I'm getting paid pretty good money to do what I'm doing, and I'm happy with that."

Since the streak started on December 9, the Cavs have held four opponents to fewer than 80 points.

One of those was the Washington Bullets, who lost 91-75 last Wednesday at Cleveland's new Gund Arena, which was sold out for the third straight time.

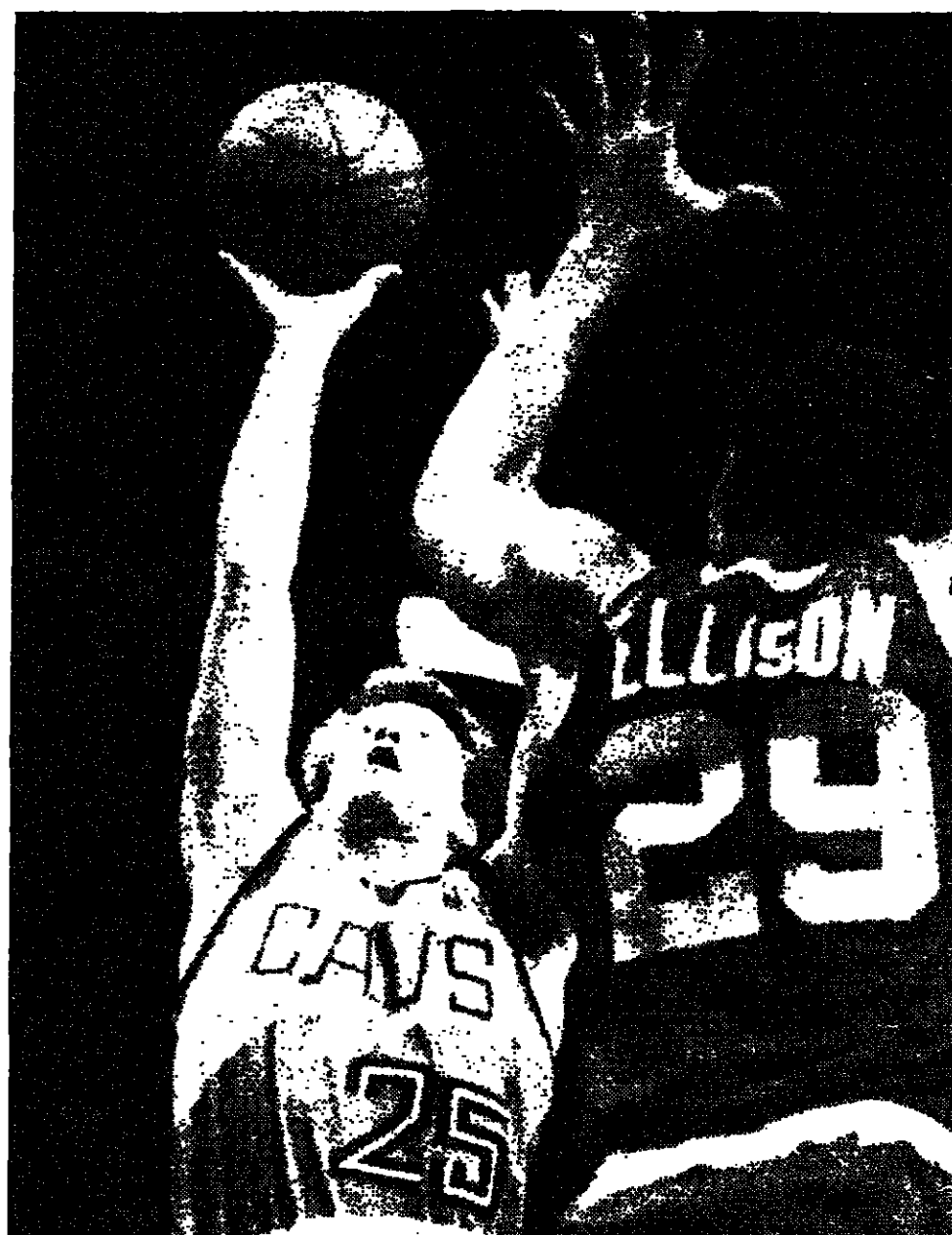
While the slow-down offense has been grabbing attention, Washington's Calbert Cheaney said defense was the real key to Cleveland's success.

"They just play hard-nosed defense," Cheaney said. "They've got a good rotation on their defense."

That very fact may contribute to Cleveland's sense of humility.

"When you look back and realize that you had to play at Chicago, at New York, at New Jersey, those are tough places to win games."

"It hasn't been like we've been facing a lot of teams that we expect to win against. We can't look at



Mark Price of the Cleveland Cavaliers #25 shoots over Pervis Ellison of the Boston Celtics (AFP photo)

any team like it's one we expect to beat."

And with Fratello relying on strong contributions from so many players, keeping them all healthy is a big concern.

"The only thing that will hurt us is if somebody gets hurt," Hill said. "If Mark Price or Hot Rod Williams goes down, we'll really be hurting."

"After the All-Star break, it's going to be tough. We're just trying to build a cushion in case that happens."

Shearer grabs three goals as Blackburn win

LONDON (AFP) — Alan Shearer grabbed his second hat-trick of the season to lead Blackburn six points above Arsenal at the top of the English Premier League Monday — only after they were given a 10-minute reprieve by West Ham.

The England striker took tally of goals of 23 as Blackburn were forced to play from behind for a 4-2 home triumph on an Arctic moon.

The millionaire club now sits at the top of the standings with 52 points, six clear of champions Manchester United, who are home to Coventry on Sunday.

English bookmaker William Hill has now installed Blackburn, who beat Crystal Palace Saturday, as 13-8 on favorites to win the competition.

Two of Shearer's goals came from the penalty spot, first after 14 minutes when he was upended by West Ham goalkeeper Luke Kloss.

But Harry Redknapp's runners — without a win since London — equalised through Tony Cottee's sixth in five games in the 33rd minute and took the more imposed side in the first half.

They then moved into a 2-1 lead when Ian Rush's pass led to a 38th minute goal.

But any hopes West Ham had of pulling off an unlikely win came crashing when Graeme Le Saux scored with a free-kick in the 41st minute to level the match and Shearer then headed on the style to smash his second and third goals, the latter from the penalty spot after 79 minutes.

"We were sloppy at times when they went 2-1 up it was the kick up the backside needed," admitted Shearer.

But we showed character spirit by coming back to the three points."

Shearer paid tribute to the midfield work of West Ham.

"They looked quite generous which is a credit to them because not many teams have come here and done that."

Two games in three days and work and it showed a

bit at times, but we finished very strongly which is pleasing," added Shearer, who refused to say Rovers were now on course for their first title in more than half a century.

"At one stage last season Manchester United were 16 points ahead and to say we're pulling away now we are six ahead is ridiculous."

"I think people are starting to get excited prematurely but I would rather be here than at the bottom and think we are safe from the drop now."

Robbie Fowler remains hard on Shearer's goal-scoring heels after netting two goals in title-chasing Liverpool's 4-0 win over Norwich, their fourth victory in as many holiday-period games.

The England Under-21 striker's double boosted his tally for the season to 22 and gave teenage goalkeeper Andy Marshall a tough lesson about the game's fickle fortunes.

Marshall, the hero in Norwich's 2-1 success over Newcastle on Saturday in his first match as the injured Bryan Gunn's deputy, had a torrid time.

First John Scales headed in from a corner after 14 minutes. Then Fowler, latching on to Ian Rush's pass, put the ball between Marshall's legs in the 38th minute.

He scored again two minutes into the second half and Rush completed the rout seven minutes from time.

Andy Dibble saved Ruel Fox's penalty as Newcastle slipped out of the top four with a 0-0 draw at home to Manchester City, while Aston Villa and Leeds were also involved in a goalless stalemate at Villa Park.

Nottingham Forest moved past Newcastle into fourth place in the standings when Gary Bull — deputising for the injured Stan Collymore — grabbed the only goal in their 1-0 win over Crystal Palace.

A Matt Le Tissier penalty in the 70th minute ended Sheffield Wednesday's hopes of a 100 per cent holiday sequence as they drew 1-1 with Southampton.

The Hillsborough side were struggling near the relegation zone just seven days ago, until an explosive 10-goal burst eased manager Trevor Francis' worries.

They looked on course for another victory after Graham Hyde's second goal in two games, but Southampton skipper Le Tissier equalised after Neal Haney was tripped in the box.

Wimbledon, unbeaten in six matches, defeated Everton 2-1 thanks to two goals in the first eight minutes from Mick Harford.

Paul Rideout pulled one back after 17 minutes with his third goal in two games, but the Merseysiders failed to capitalise.

Ipswich crushed Leicester 4-1 to wrap places at the bottom of the league. Chris Kiwomya scored two goals, with league debutant Adam Tanner and Frank Yallop doing the rest of the damage.

Australians question cost of rescuing yachtswoman

SYDNEY (R) — Officials of an around-the-world yacht race Tuesday defended the rescue of French yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier as the Australian media questioned the estimated \$51 million (\$775,000) cost of the operation.

"The cost of not launching the rescue is a human life," an angry organiser of the BOC race, Dan McConnell, told reporters at a Sydney news conference.

Autissier was winched from her dismasted yacht last Sunday after huge sub-Antarctic seas and gales rolled her 18-metre (54-foot) yacht, the Ecureuil Pointu Charentais II, 900 Nautical miles south of Australia.

The 38-year-old yachtswoman was heading for Sydney on the second leg of the solo round-the-world race when she set off distress beacons last Wednesday in the perilous area known to sailors as the roaring forties.

Autissier's rescue took four days after she was initially sighted and involved an Australian navy frigate, air force Hercules and Orion aircraft, and a navy helicopter.

Rescue officials have estimated the cost of the rescue at \$1 million.

"Maybe I don't cost one million dollars," Autissier told the packed news conference, but added she thought Australia made the right decision to rescue her.

The Age newspaper said in an editorial on Tuesday that race organisers should pay for Autissier's rescue, not the Australian taxpayer, because the risks she took could be calculated.

But BOC officials said Australia was obliged under international conventions to rescue sailors off its coast.

"Australia is party of the United Nations and the United Nations has an agreement with nations that have

coastlines ... and they take responsibility for search and rescue of sailors off their coast," McConnell said.

Australia's search and rescue responsibilities stem from two international conventions established by the International Maritime Organisation, the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the 1979 Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue.

The conventions create an obligation to save life first, then quibble about the costs later.

Autissier said after the news conference she was surprised by the cost questions. "I have never heard in any other emergency situation

questions like that," she told reporters.

"It surprised me a lot because it is a part of the sea story, it is a part of the sea life, to go to rescue people at any cost because normally

human life has no cost," she added.

"I think it is a very bad story and I don't think people that run this story are great people. Everybody has to rescue everybody," she said.

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PROTEST IN MOSCOW: Surrounded by fellow demonstrators with placards, some activists lie on the ground during a symbolic "die in" protest at Moscow Square on Tuesday. They protested at the death of Chechens and

Russians in the current military conflict in the breakaway republic and demanded an immediate stop of all Russian military actions in Chechnya (see page one) (AFP photo)

Peres: Syria deadlock should not halt peace

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel, upset by Arab support for Syria in deadlocked talks with the Jewish state, said on Tuesday normalisation of relations with Arabs must not be conditional on moving towards peace with Damascus.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres arrived in Cairo on Tuesday for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on issues ranging from bilateral ties to Palestinian and Syrian peace deals.

Mr. Peres was later to head his delegation in talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on expanding Palestinian self-rule in the occupied West Bank.

But Mr. Peres' main concern was to seek clarification on the summit in Alexandria last week between Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, which gave unusually strong support to Damascus in peace talks with Israel.

Mr. Peres said a news conference that Mr. Mubarak "said the purpose of the (Arab) meeting was not to stop the peace process or to slow it down... on the contrary, to promote it. Egypt feels as we do that time has come to make peace with Syria."

Mr. Peres said he understood there was no intention "to condition one move upon another move. Whenever we can make headway, we

should do it in the direction of peace."

The summit angered Israel because it implicitly promised Syria that Arab countries would not fully develop relations with Israel before Syria struck its own deal, diplomats said.

The Israel-Syria talks are stuck on the question of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, which have been in Israeli control since the 1967 Middle East war.

An Israeli source said his country feared Damascus was dragging Cairo into adopting a hardline stance towards Israel and delaying normalisation of ties between them.

Mr. Mubarak, seeking to calm Israeli talk, said Israel should not plan to direct against Israel or at slowing down the normalisation of relations with Israel.

Asked whether Syrian President Hafez Al Assad had relayed any new suggestion during the summit to move talks forward, Mr. Mubarak said: "President Assad wants peace and we encourage this attitude... we hope we can reach something by the middle of this year, God willing."

On normalising relations between Arab countries and Israel, Mr. Mubarak said: "Each country has the right to normalise relations with Israel and we do not object."

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said the Mubarak-Peres meeting touched on another sensitive issue, the signing of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Egypt, which in 1979 became the first Arab country to make peace with Israel, has asked Arabs not to sign an extension of the treaty unless Israel signed.

Cairo has urged Israel, which is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, to sign but Israel says it will not do so as long as it faces a potential nuclear threat from enemies such as Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Mr. Musa bristled when an Israeli reporter told him the nuclear issue was causing tension in relations.

"You have to learn that to differ with you is not necessarily to be an enemy of you. You have to accept that we differ with Israel on this question... to think that whenever we say 'no', or disagree, this means that we are against you, is wrong. You have to change your mind and attitude. This attitude is bad."

Mr. Peres also denied his country was seeking to dominate the Arabs economically as it makes peace with its neighbours, and emphasised the need for cooperation.

"Israel is interested in being reintegrated in the region. We want to reintegrate ourselves not as a leader or a dominating party," he told a conference held by the U.S.-Egyptian Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Peres dismissed as "nonsense" accusations from a participant that Israel wanted to dominate the region. "It makes me smile," he said.

"I don't understand the expression Arab economy. There is no Arab economy or Israeli economy," he added.

"A modern economy is not based on domination, but on competition," he argued, saying Middle East countries have to choose between a competitive economy based on rules and a deficient one.

Mr. Peres also made a lengthy plea for an economic policy that would enable the Middle East to compete with other regions like Asia.

The Israeli minister called for cutting Middle East military spending, which he said amounts to \$10 billion a year, and using the savings for development.

He also pleaded for the return of the region's capital invested abroad, which he estimated at \$600 billion, and for setting up new infrastructure adapted to peace.

He urged efforts to save the mainly desert region's water, 80 per cent of which he said is wasted.

Yemen says 2 killed in Saudi border clashes

DUBAI (R) — Yemen's government has told diplomats in Sanaa that two Yemenis were killed and six wounded in a New Year's Day border clash with Saudi Arabian troops, diplomats said on Tuesday.

Yemeni Parliament Speaker Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar played down the incident in remarks quoted by the Saudi Press Agency overnight. But the diplomats said Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Ali Abdul Rahman on Monday briefed diplomats from the five permanent members of the Security Council on the border clash, which he said occurred on Sunday.

Mr. Abdul Rahman charged that Saudi forces attacked Al Buqa, a north-eastern town close to the disputed border.

One Western diplomat said his embassy was told by another senior Yemeni official that three people were killed and five were wounded.

He said Abdul Rahman claimed that Saudi military units attacked a border post.

"There is no way to (immediately) verify if military units or tribesmen were involved in the clash," he said.

The official purpose of the meeting with the envoys of the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China was to inform them of the clash.

"I guess Yemen wants the five permanent members to speak to the Saudis to find out what is happening and tell them to cool it," the diplomat added.

Despite the rise in tension in the past few months and Yemeni claims that Saudi Arabia was building up its border force, diplomats say Sanaa is eager not to escalate the situation and is undertaking efforts to narrow differences.

Yemen is "anxious not to play the incident up, play things quietly and seriously wants to improve ties," one said.

Asked if Saudi Arabia was massing troops along the border, he said: "I believe that is the case... (Abdul Rahman) claimed that Saudi Arabia was boosting its troops along the border."

The Saudi Press Agency quoted Sheikh Ahmad as denying in a radio interview "reports quoting Yemeni officials accusing Saudi Arabia of penetrating a border area."

"He said that what happened was a kind of misunderstanding and not a penetration in... Yemen's Sadaa province," the official Saudi agency added.

An official Yemeni statement issued in Sanaa on Sunday night said an attack was mounted deep inside Yemeni territory.

It described the alleged attack as new aggression, and said "Hawks" within the Saudi leadership were trying to derail reconciliation efforts by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Saudi King Fahd.

Mr. Ahmad told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) there were "elements trying to harm relations between the two states" adding that efforts were under way to end the two countries' differences.

The speaker last week visited Saudi Arabia, where he met the king and the crown prince during the first visit to the kingdom by a Yemeni official since ties deteriorated over border disputes.

In December, Yemen accused its northern neighbour of violating its border by erecting observation posts and building roads in border areas including Sadaa. Diplomats in Sanaa said three Yemeni officers were killed in a border clash on Dec. 7.

Several rounds of ministerial talks in the past two years have failed to settle the border dispute, which dates from the 1930s.

Algerian group said to have warned Germans

HAMBURG, Germany (Agencies) — Algerian extremists have set a Jan. 7 deadline for Germany's embassy personnel in Algiers to leave Algeria, the weekly magazine Stern reported in its issue to be published Thursday.

A spokesman for the German foreign ministry in Bonn would not confirm or deny the report, saying it concerned security matters.

Germany cut back its embassy staff in Algiers after a surge of violence against foreigners by militants trying to topple the military-backed government in Algiers.

Stern said German security officials were taking the Islamic threat, contained in a German-language letter, very seriously.

Other Western embassies had received similar threats. In Paris, French authorities on Tuesday identified a third of the four hijackers behind the hostage drama on board an Air France jet last week, judicial sources said.

He was named as Salim Layadi, 24, from Kouba in Algeria. It was not clear whether he was a known member of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the radical group which claimed responsibility for the hijacking.

Only one of the four hijackers remains unidentified. The head of the hijack team was named soon after the drama ended by the Algerian interior minister as Abdullah Yahia, from the Al Harach region of the former French colony.

Three days later a second member was identified by Algerian officials using fingerprints obtained by French police. He was Makhlouf Benguetat, 25, also from Al Harach.

The four hijackers, who seized the Airbus with more than 200 passengers on board at Algiers airport on Dec. 24, were killed by crack French intervention troops at Marseille airport two days later.

Algerian extremists meanwhile reiterated their declaration of war on France, but denied a threat made last week to move the conflict onto the French mainland.

The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) said it was victim of a misinformation campaign by "suspect parties" who wanted to damage its cause. The threat was made in a statement transmitted to AFP by the AIS eastern committee Thursday.

"Our declaration of war on France is legal," said an AIS communiqué published by the London daily Al Hayat, reiterating an editorial published in an AIS newsletter on Friday, declaring war on

France for alleged complicity with the Algerian government.

But it denied supporting the threat made in the AIS statement Thursday. "Waging the war in France has never been mentioned in publications of our mujahedeen," it said.

"The mujahedeen have taken notice of a suspect information campaign aimed at tarnishing the image of the Islamic Front and at embroiling it in political complications by distorting the editorial," it added.

"The communiqué attributed to the AIS eastern committee was published by suspect parties having no ties to the mujahedeen and which wanted to harm the Front's interests and torpedo its actions," it concluded.

Last week's editorial, in the Al Feth Al Mouabine (crushing victory) newsletter, said that "war against France has become a legal duty" under Islamic Sharia law.

It said the French government had been shown to be in collaboration with the Algerian regime through the assault by French special forces on the hijacked Air France Airbus in Marseille.

The AIS statement said: "The AIS groups are capable of hitting France on its own territory and the coming days will show, with God's help, their capacity to strike the unbeliever in his own home."

Meanwhile an official from the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), of which the AIS is the armed wing, said in an interview in a Paris newspaper that waging a violent campaign on the French mainland would be a "strategic error."

"It would be stupid and a strategic error to extend the conflict into other countries," said Ibrahim Youness, an advisor to Sheikh Abdulhak Sahraoui, a founding member of the FIS, in an interview with the Catholic La Croix.

"The FIS has no interest in making war in France and has no interest in extending, either here or elsewhere in Europe, a conflict which must remain intra-Algerian," he added.

And he directly attacked the Armed Islamic Group saying they saw terrorism as an end in itself.

"Whereas the Islamic Salvation Army sees it as a way to bring power to the negotiating table. We are convinced that the solution is political and we want it to be peaceful," he added.

The AIS has spearheaded the fundamentalist insurgency against the Algerian government since the army cancelled January 1992 elections which the FIS was poised to win.

COLUMN

Man takes ex-wife hostage to avenge uncaring world

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese man, bitter at an uncaring world, held his 70-year-old ex-wife at knife-point for 21 hours in the hospital where she worked as a nurse, police said Tuesday. Masaru Nakagawa, 62, barricaded himself in a changing room in the Tokyo hospital with the woman, who divorced him about a year ago. Holding a knife to her chest, he shouted to police that he was prepared to die. He eventually released her and gave himself up early Tuesday. Police are still investigating the motive, but Mr. Nakagawa, told them he became angry after he called his brother's house to say Happy New Year and his sister-in-law slammed the phone down on him. "I wanted to get rid of my discontent," he said. "My wife left me and the rest of the world is treating me coldly."

British police on drugs raid stuck in lift

LONDON (R) — Nine British police officers on a drugs raid failed to reach their target after they squeezed into a lift made for eight — and it ground to a halt. The police were trapped for 45 minutes in the lift in Conventry, central England, before their cries for help were heard, the Sun newspaper reported Tuesday. "I told them I would get the police and they shouted: 'We are the bloody police — get the fire brigade!'" said Eddie Liddle, a resident of the block of flats where the police were trapped.

Pentagon hacker, 16, arrested

LONDON (AFP) — London police have arrested a boy of 16 suspected of having hacked his way into the computers of the Pentagon and laid bare U.S. defence secrets, the Independent reported Tuesday. He had access to banks of data on research into ballistic missiles, warplane projects, equipment, pay, personal files and communications from agents on North Korea at the height of the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear programme, the paper said. He then put out the details on Internet, the world-wide computerised information network with some 20 million subscribers, the Independent added. The U.S. Defence Department admitted last summer that unknown hackers had gained access to its data banks over some seven months through the Internet, to which the military information network Milnet is linked. Data had been altered, deleted or stolen, the Pentagon said. The Independent said the youth from north London had been arrested last July. He had been traced because he had stayed plugged into a U.S. defence computer for an entire night.

Dubbers call off 10-week strike

PARIS (AFP) — More than 400 artists who dub foreign language films and television series into French called off a strike of more than 10 weeks early Tuesday after the promise of talks on their demands for royalties. The strike had left television companies without American cartoons, soap operas and crime series; disrupted cinema releases and deprived technical and other staff of distribution companies of work. The dubbing actors were demanding recognition of their status as creative artists, and especially the payment of royalties for repeats of their films on television or sales on videocassettes. A mediator was appointed after a judge ruled their demands legitimate and Culture Minister Jacques Toubon last month publicly backed the strikers. Talks between the two sides are set to begin Thursday. The strike meant that one film, The Band Played On, recounting the arrival of AIDS in the United States, could only be given limited release in English with sub-titles because it was dubbed into French in Canada. Also threatened is the latest Woody Allen movie, Bullets Over Broadway, which was scheduled for general release later this month.

Rabbani resignation will not alter power balance

KABUL (Agencies) — Kabul's security chief said Tuesday any resignation by Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani would not put at risk recent improvements in the policing of the capital.

With Mr. Rabbani expected to transfer power in the next week, General Yunus Qanoom, head of the security commission, said security forces were independent of the rival politicians. Analysts said any political change would not alter the military balance of power in the capital.

The security commission represents the state, not any personality," Gen. Qanoom told a press conference at the defence ministry.

He assured that the Kabul security forces' official duties would not be affected by political changes such as the anticipated resignation of Mr. Rabbani whose term of office ran out on Dec. 28. Although the president's job has become largely a symbolic position, the various factions in Afghanistan have still not worked out who will take over the under what conditions.

But the general explained: "A system exists which is not affected by a change at the top."

United Nations special envoy Mahmood Mestiri returned to Pakistan after talks with Mr. Rabbani. The peace envoy said he hoped the president would transfer power in the next seven to 10 days.

The security commission is a joint body comprising troops of the Kabul garrison, the National Security Department (formerly the commun-

ist's Khad secret police) and the regular police, which were formerly called the Sarandoy.

Both garrison and national security forces are controlled by the defence ministry, whose de facto head is Mr. Rabbani's military strongman Ahmad Shah Masoud. The police come under the interior ministry headed by Mullah Abdul Majid who used to belong to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami faction.

Summarising progress made by the commission, Gen. Qanoom admitted that because of "lack of experience" some mistakes had been made. But he said there has been an appreciable improvement in Kabul security overall.

Mr. Mestiri told a news conference in Kabul on Monday that he was optimistic about the outcome of his attempt to bring peace between warring Afghan factions.

"The transfer of power will take place soon," Kabul radio quoted Mr. Mestiri as saying after talks with embattled President Rabbani and his allies.

Mr. Mestiri said on Sunday he would be making specific proposals to the president.

He said on Monday he would also travel to other parts of Afghanistan and appealed to the belligerents to observe a ceasefire until the transfer of power.

U.N. sources said Mr. Mestiri, a former Tunisian foreign minister, was likely to meet Mr. Hekmatyar soon in the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad.

Peace process in crisis - PLO

(Continued from page 1)

under last year's peace deal.

"Continuation of this official policy now is bound to destroy the political process because it cannot be accepted that this policy would go on and at the same time the peace process continues," Mr. Agha said, calling the move "dangerous."

Al Khader villagers, in a statement in Palestinian newspapers on Tuesday, said both land plots belonged to them and added: "We utterly reject moving settlements to another site."

Jewish settlers said they were willing to consider Monday's compromise but warned the government that work on the new site must start immediately.

Mr. Ben-Eliezer told Israel's army radio he supported the government's decision with reservations. He said he thought the Palestinians would see no difference between the two hilltops.

Dr. Shaath said he was not satisfied with the Israeli move and insisted the talks here would tackle the extension of settlements — along with the police killings and restrictions on PLO activities in Arab East Jerusalem.

"It is important to have stopped the settlement that had been started in Ephraim but what needs to be done is to really abandon the whole idea of building new settlements or thickening old ones," he said.

"What needs to be done is to have a total and complete halt of settlement activities," he said.

"The expansion of Israeli settlements and the failure to resolve this problem will create a crisis in the peace process," Dr. Shaath warned earlier.

Continued Jewish settlement contravened the peace accords signed with Israel, which called for the status quo to be maintained until negotiations on a final agreement begin in May 1996.

The issue of the 120,000 settlers on the West Bank is at the heart of the deadlock on extending self-rule.

Israel is meanwhile to present the PLO with a long list of Palestinian "violations" of the autonomy accords at the Cairo talks, the daily Haaretz said.

Mr. Peres would accuse the Palestinians of failing to hand over a list of all the Palestinian police working in the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho, the Israeli newspaper reported.

Talks between Israel and the PLO over the next stage of autonomy — the staging of Palestinian elections originally scheduled for July — have been deadlocked over an army withdrawal from West Bank towns and villages.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, some 500 Palestinians demonstrated against the construction of a security fence around the Jewish settlement of Ariel.

Waving Palestinian flags, the demonstrators marched from the neighbouring village of Salfit and gathered on a hill before dispersing peacefully.

The villagers say the fence encloses plots of land which belong to them. While the Ariel authorities argue that the fence is to be built on public land granted to the settlement by the state.

Some 13,000 Israelis live in Ariel, which covers 3,000 hectares of land.

The government recently authorised the building of 140 extra housing units there.